Design

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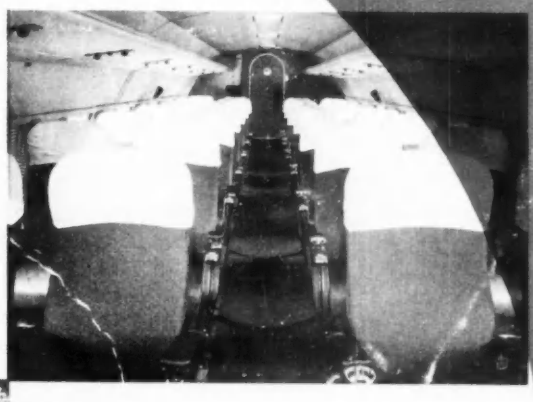
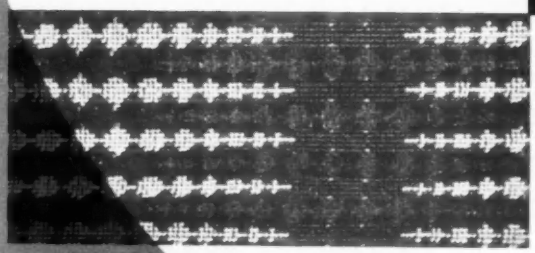
Smiths' clock p. 14





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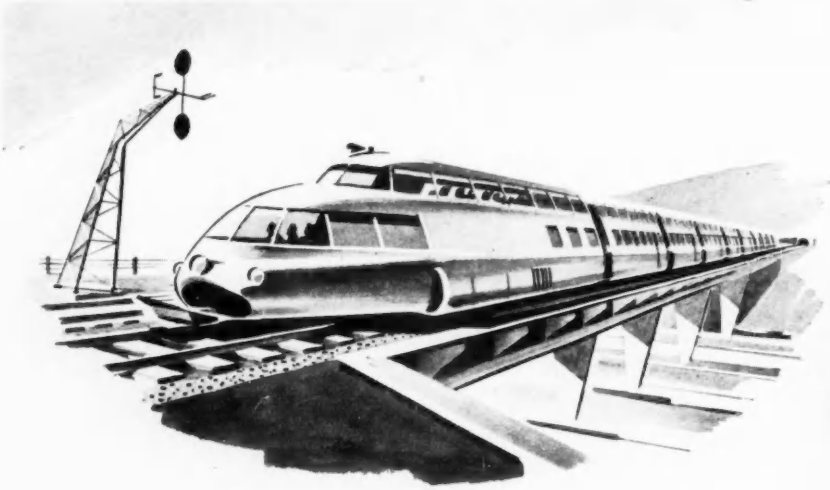
The Council of Industrial Design February 1953 No 50 Price 2s



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'City', a poster designed for London Transport last year by Edward Bawden, A.R.A.

'Autumn', a famous poster designed for London Transport in 1938 by E. McKnight Kauffer.

THESE are two of the series of 41 full colour prints of London Transport posters, which includes the work of Rex Whistler, Ivon Hitchens, Clifford and Rosemary Ellis and John Minton, among many others. The average size of the prints is 6″ x 5″. They can be obtained, price 1s. each (postage 3d.), from the Publicity Officer, London Transport, 55 Broadway, Westminster, S.W.1.

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NUMBER 50
FEBRUARY 1953

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DESIGN next month

A special issue on

INTERIOR DESIGN

in the new London offices

of Time–Life International

Design

Fifty by GORDON RUSSELL

THIS IS THE FIFTIETH NUMBER of DESIGN, which certainly sounds more than four years and a bit. But with magazines, as with children, the first few years are of crucial importance.

We set out to give a service to British manufacturers by placing before them month by month information on industrial design from all over the world. Much of this information had not been available hitherto in this country, and most of the rest had had to be dug out from various sources. That this service was appreciated was shown immediately by the list of subscribers, which included many famous names. And it soon became apparent that the magazine was proving of interest to retailers and educationists as well as to manufacturers. Nor was the interest confined to Britain: our subscription list abroad grew more rapidly than at home.

We are not in the least complacent. We should like to see the magazine not only better but bigger, so as to cover more adequately certain groups of trades. It is growing slowly in size, but we have been severely limited by the rapid rise in costs of paper and printing over the last four years. Also, it is by no means easy to find people who can write of design problems with understanding and clarity. In this connection I would like to pay a special tribute to Paul Reilly, who has contributed to almost every number from the start. When we were thinking of launching the magazine I was told that we should run dry of material within a few months. This has not proved to be the case. We have ample raw material: far more than we can handle. And the growing interest in the subject, which is in part due to DESIGN, makes it appear that there will be still more in the future.

Although it is only possible to deal with a few trades in detail in any one issue, we have tried to include a fair amount of general design information. The articles on the design policy of particular firms usually have points of interest to businesses in quite different trades. Indeed, it has always been our aim to point out how certain results have been achieved: never to illustrate products which should be copied. To suggest, as has been done, that I have urged manufacturers to design in, say, a Scandinavian way is nonsense. I have always said that we have in Britain a great design tradition which has been strangely neglected.

May I thank our readers, our advertisers, our correspondents and all who have helped to make the enterprise a success.

LETTERS

The article on the Potteries in the December 1952 issue has encouraged readers to give diverging opinions on decorated ware and public taste.

SIR: Your article on the Potteries (DESIGN December 1952 pages 7–15) prompts me to make this short comment. In my opinion it is much too early to forecast any design trend in pottery for the home market. Up to the present we have been selling very successfully in the home market the same type of patterns that have been selling in many export markets for a number of years. These, so far, have been more popular than newer styles which we have offered to a limited extent. People who buy expensive fine china are, generally speaking, more conservative in their taste than people who buy cheap pottery which they may not possess for such a long time. Many of our customers have old houses with old furniture in them, and we have always tried to produce patterns which, even though they do follow current trends in architecture and interior decoration, look right at any time, rather than going for styles which may be very popular at one moment but which invariably go out of fashion.

J. E. HARTILL
Director
Mintons Ltd
Stoke-on-Trent

SIR: There is a considerable difference of opinion within the pottery industry concerning the type of design best suited to the home market.

With regard to the export markets, two points in our opinion stand out. One is that there still is, and probably always will be, a steady demand for the traditional type of decoration backed up by quality in design and manufacturing technique. This is perhaps best exemplified in earthenware by the landscape or Willow type of underglaze print. On the other hand there is even less doubt that the more modern or contemporary types of design, as exemplified by the coupe shape with suitable decorations, have definitely arrived in the North American markets. With regard to the United States, it is an irony that British manufacturers are almost too late in adapting themselves to this modern trend, which has already been in vogue for several years. This is unfortunate, though perhaps unavoidable, in view of the fact that up to twelve months ago manufacturers had so many orders on their books for existing patterns that a complete change in their styles, and particularly the introduction of a new shape, presented considerable difficulty. From experience in the Canadian market, it would appear that while the demand for the new styles is undoubtedly there, buyers are inclined to be cautious in placing large orders until they are completely satisfied that the demand is not merely a passing phase.

We ourselves feel that these new styles will become popular in the home market, although to a much more limited extent than in the United States, and possibly with a less exotic, and what might be termed a more dignified type of decoration. There is, incidentally, a trend in this direction also in America. After consultation with a number of buyers from our large stores, it is obvious that the contemporary furniture which they are now showing to an increasing extent calls for the new styles in pottery, both as regards shape and decoration.

H. FRANCIS WOOD
Managing Director
Wood & Sons Ltd
Burslem
Stoke-on-Trent

SIR: The restrictions on the sale of decorated pottery on the home market having been lifted only a short time ago, it is very difficult to forecast the type of design which will have most appeal. In my opinion, smart contemporary styles will be most popular, especially among the younger generation. The trend towards simplicity in furnishings and fabrics generally, will also apply to pottery both in shape and design, so that they become an integral part of the modern home. From the colour angle the low toned pastel shades have the most appeal and are the most suitable for the smart, simple type of tableware services.

CECIL J. NOKE
Art Director
Doulton & Co Ltd
Stoke-on-Trent

SIR: It was interesting to note that of the 26 photographs which illustrated your article on the Potteries, 18 showed examples decorated in simple floral sprig patterns. The character of these decorations was dictated not so much by the taste of the American markets as by the skill of artists available to the British pottery industry during the war and post-war years. Owing to the exodus from the industry into the services at this time, painting apprentices and lithographic transferers were rare and consequently there were few of the heavy complicated patterns typical of the pre-war period. The high cost of the lithographic transfer process, mentioned in the article, was an additional cause of this simplicity. It was when the Americans found that they were unable to buy the heavy traditional designs that they acquired a taste for the lighter patterns.

The immediate effect of the release of decorated pottery for the home market will be a craze for anything coloured. In the cheaper ranges self-coloured ware, which can be cheaply mass-produced since the cost of decoration is not involved, should be very popular. In the more expensive ranges the designs which have been produced for the foreign, and particularly American, markets will satisfy the needs of home buyers for the time being. But it will be a number of years before a style, either new or traditional, will be developed specifically for home needs.

DR. J. THOMAS
41 Goulden Road
Withington
Manchester 20

SIR: During the early 1940's, in Western America at least, it was occasionally possible to find table ware of coupe shape in exclusive high-priced shops, usually offered as the most advanced fashion. By 1946, coupe-shaped ware seemed to be more generally available in all shops, and though not displayed as a somewhat daring innovation, it was still expensive and still considered new enough to be fashionable.

However, that was six years or more ago, and the point I wish to make is that the intervening six years would be rather a long time for any object to remain fashionable, especially in the American market. As a matter of fact, even in 1946 I would have expected that the vogue, from a fashion point of view, was passing for coupe-shaped ware, and that something different, if only for the sake of change, would soon make its appearance.

CHARLES HOWARD
Helions Bumpstead
Haverhill, Suffolk

The cover disliked

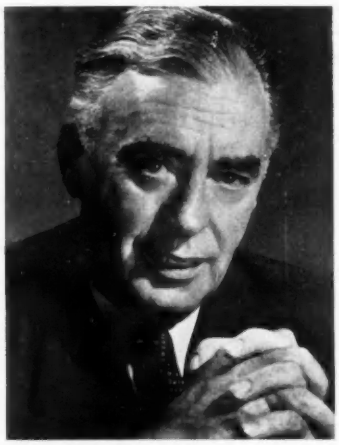
SIR: May I express great disappointment in the new DESIGN cover for 1953. In contrast with the pleasing symmetry of the basic design of 1952, a perfect foil for the different objects displayed thereon, we are now to have a heavy, squashed, flatfooted print reminiscent of the worst Victorian style, with a few objects placed haphazardly on a basic pattern whose own design is spoiled by the outlandish contrast of washy blue with green.

AVRIL SHANSON
24 Penshurst Gardens
Edgware, Middlesex

New chairman for CoID

Dr Edwards retires

MR W. J. WORBOYS HAS BEEN APPOINTED by the President of the Board of Trade to be Chairman of the Council of Industrial Design in succession to Dr R. S. Edwards, who retired on January 31. Mr Worboys is a director of Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. He was born in Australia in 1900 and as a Rhodes scholar from the University of Western Australia came to Oxford, where he did research in chemistry and took the degree of doctor of philosophy. Like his predecessor, he is a forceful personality, believes wholeheartedly in the Council's work and practises what he preaches. He has just been responsible for commissioning Sir Hugh Casson to advise on the redecoration and refurnishing of the Board Room at Imperial Chemical House, in which, during the Board of Trade tenancy at Millbank, the first meeting of the Council of Industrial Design was held. He has been an active member of the Council since 1947 and is chairman of its Street Furniture Committee. He has recently returned from a visit to Canada and the United States.



W. J. Worboys, BSc, DPhil

Dr Edwards, the retiring chairman, was an original member of the Council when it was set up in 1944. At that time he was a director of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. His drive and ability led the first chairman, Sir Thomas Barlow, to make him chairman of the Council's finance and general purposes committee. He was almost immediately called upon to deal with the finances of the first large post-war exhibition, 'Britain Can Make It', in which his organising capacity proved of great value. The following year Sir Thomas retired owing to a breakdown in health. This raised an awkward problem in a very young organisation set up to do a difficult job. Sir Thomas had been concerned with all the preliminaries and as Director General of Civilian Clothing at the Board of Trade during the war he knew the Council's parent body intimately. The President decided to appoint Dr Edwards to succeed him, and the appointment proved a wise one. Dr Edwards enjoyed the confidence of both the Council and the Board of Trade, although he was not very well known in industry. He tackled the job with characteristic energy. During 1948, when it became clear that the Council would have a very considerable share in the Festival of Britain 1951 and a great increase of work was imminent, he was appointed to the Festival of Britain Council. Meantime, he had accepted the chairmanship of the North-Eastern Gas Board, whose headquarters are in Leeds. This was a full-time job, yet, rather than leave the Council during Festival preparations, he did not hesitate to face the very real difficulties which the move created. He leaves the Council, which he has served so well, with the Festival operations successfully behind it and its position well established. He takes the good wishes of Council members and staff with him and all hope that he will keep in close contact.

R. S. Edwards, PhD, ARCS

Scottish Committee Chairman

MR R. A. MACLEAN, Chairman of A. F. Stoddard and Co Ltd, who was an original member of the Scottish Committee and has been its Chairman since 1949, has accepted the invitation of the President of the Board of Trade to carry on for a further period of two years. G.R.

POINTS and POINTERS

HONOURS. In the New Year's Honours List we congratulate Dr Herbert Read, author of ART AND INDUSTRY and founder of Design Research Unit and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, who became Knight Bachelor; Miss Audrey Withers, editor of VOGUE, a member of the CoID and chairman of the Coronation Souvenirs Committee, who received the OBE; Oliver Simon, typographer and chairman of The Curwen Press Ltd, who also received the OBE.

FURNITURE. Now that Utility price control has been removed, the BFM Exhibition, which opens at Earls Court on February 17, promises a special interest. Before the war furniture of good design was made by a few firms, none of them very large, and the best of it was expensive. Already there are signs that contemporary furniture is rising in price, but the exhibition will show if the larger firms now interested will make this a general trend.

NIDC. Shown here is the Design Merit Award label issued by the Canadian National Industrial Design Committee. Labels, dated with the year of the award, can only be obtained from the NIDC and attached to winning products (see DESIGN January p. 30).

50. The fact that 49 issues of the magazine precede this one is a slender excuse for self-congratulation. But one thing might well be said. DESIGN began with 24 pages; it now has 40, with more advertisers and a proportional increase in readership. Yet with more pages it is still difficult to illustrate and describe all new and interesting work. To help us on with the next half century we should welcome the critical views of readers on what we offer and how we present it.

INTERIOR DESIGN IN THE AIR

William Gaunt

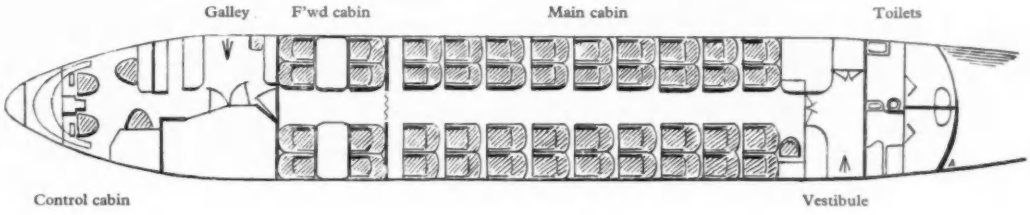
Speaking at the 1951 *International Design Congress, Mr C. H. Jackson, an executive of* BOAC, *stated that "good industrial design must feature in all our efforts to attract custom, and imbue the passenger with a feeling of confidence, a feeling which will be strengthened by relaxing in an atmosphere of comfort – amid surroundings and accessories that are pleasant and in good taste". How far have these aims been realised? To answer this Mr William Gaunt has been studying the interior design of one particular airliner – the de Havilland* COMET *– and here sets out his impressions from a layman's point of view.*

SINCE ITS FIRST FLIGHT IN JULY 1949, the merits of the de Havilland COMET have been often demonstrated and are well known. But to have provided noiseless and vibrationless flight at over twice the speed of conventional propeller driven airliners, and at comparatively economic operating costs, are achievements which need no further comment here. As a layman, it was its appearance, and in particular its interior design, which most impressed me when I went to Hatfield.

At the outset, the Development Branch of the British Overseas Airways Corporation gave their requirements for the COMET in quite general terms to the de Havilland Aircraft Company: accommodation for 36 passengers, a flight and cabin crew of six, a galley, separate toilets and dressing rooms, a small library, light luggage space and so on.

The next stage was to plan this out on paper which was the task of the de Havilland design office, under the general supervision of the Chief Designer, R. E. Bishop, who worked in constant consultation with the engineers and technicians. The plan established the position and proportions of cockpit, galley, forward cabin, main cabin, vestibule cloakrooms and freight compartments. The drawing, once approved by BOAC, went to the important 'prototype' or 'mock-up' stage. Here a full-scale model was made (cheaply of wood, paper and cardboard) in which every detail could be examined, discussed and, where practicable, improved. Many improvements in the interior were,

Section and plan showing the seating arrangement in the forward and main cabin for 44 passengers. An alternative arrangement for a lower passenger density can be provided with seven rows of seats in the main cabin instead of nine. This gives a total seating capacity of 36.



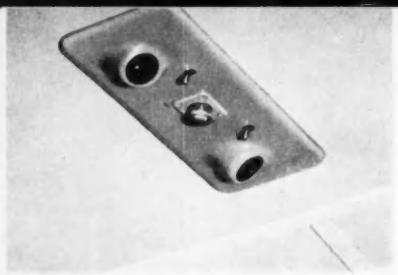
in fact, made at this stage, and in order to avoid the expense of a finished mock-up a one-tenth scale model and material schedule were prepared by the BOAC Development Engineering Branch. In this case it was necessary for the model to represent only the end of the main cabin, the vestibule and the washrooms, allowing a further saving in expense.

Certain simplifications followed from the adoption of the jet engine itself. It made possible an air-conditioning system that dispensed with a complex apparatus requiring petrol burning combustion heaters costly to maintain and supervise. Some 15 separate items, each in quadruplicate, necessary in the cockpit of a piston engined air liner, disappeared from the cockpit of the COMET. A new layout of controls and instruments had to be made and the opinions of experienced pilots were sought on every detail before the final arrangement was adopted.

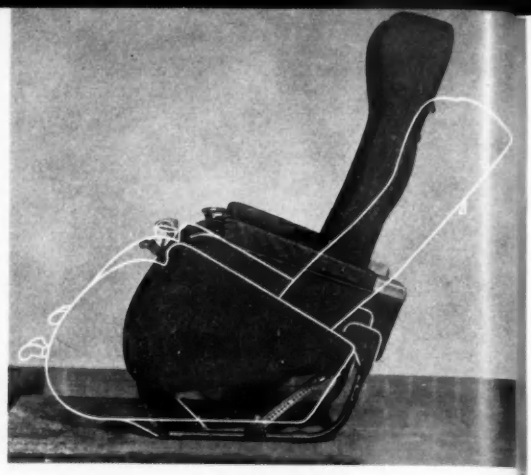
The main cabin

Here, as in all parts of the interior, the layout and details are consistent and simple. But as I was constantly reminded this simplicity is strictly functional, for where limitations of space and weight are as stringent as in an airliner, there is no margin for purely aesthetic effect at the expense of function. Exactly how stringent these limitations are was explained to me by one of the principal de Havilland designers. To gain some convenience in the seating arrangements on the next COMET, a variation of one inch might be

The main cabin looking towards the 'ship's library' and the stewardess's station. The arrangement of the reading-lamps and call buttons above each pair of chairs can be seen. There are also gangway lights at floor level.

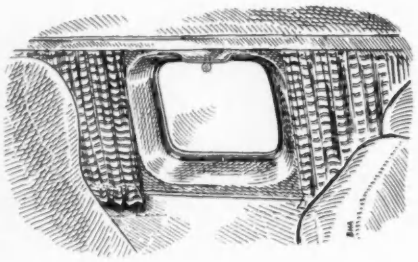


One of the units comprising twin reading-lamps and call button, designed by de Havillands.



allowed in plotting out the interior space; or to adjust the flow of air over the aircraft a slight alteration in the height of the cabin ceiling might be considered.

As a result of considerable research on the part of BOAC a number of standard features are incorporated in the COMET. Most important of these is the adjustable chair manufactured by Vickers Armstrong Ltd with DUNLOPILLO upholstery, covered with wool faced tapestry by T. F.



PERSPEX *of special strength was used in the windows which are of a size and shape normally associated with low altitude flying. The curtain materials were made by the Old Bleach Linen Co.*

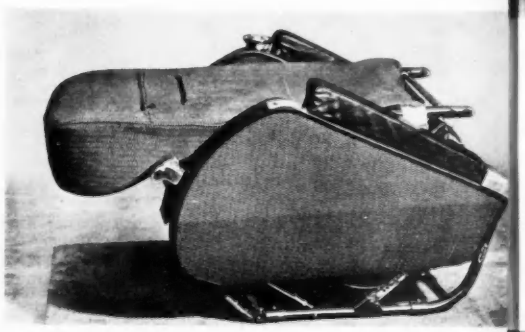
RIGHT: *Access to the control mechanism can be gained by the removal of the side panels. The control cable is adjustable for the correct setting of the locking mechanism. Stainless steel is used for the locking bar to ensure trouble-free service*

Firth & Sons. Again to quote Mr C. H. Jackson of BOAC, "the success of industrial design in an aircraft interior can be measured by the degree to which the passenger is content to remain in his chair". That the passenger's comfort has, in this case, been most carefully studied will be clear from the accompanying illustrations.

The unique feature of the design is the simple control mechanism allowing the seat to be lowered and tilted as the back is inclined. Twenty intermediate positions between the lounging and the fully upright can be selected by means of control levers. The chair is balanced to the weight of an average person so that the minimum of effort is needed to change a position.

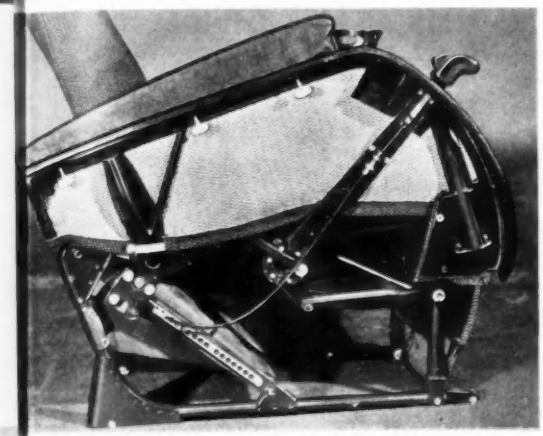
Access to the control mechanism can be gained by the removal of the side panels, and servicing is made simple by the use of a number of sub-assemblies bolted together. The metal framework is made of tubular light alloy and is stove enamelled to resist rust. For convenience of storage and removal the back may be folded flat and in this position the chair can be easily manhandled in confined spaces.

Additional features are the non-fuming ashtray and the meal tray. This tray is virtually a table with two folding legs which fit into slots on the front of the chair, and was designed and made by Vickers. When not in use it is con-

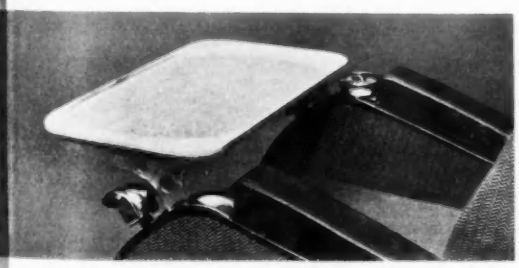


RIGHT: *The meal tray designed and produced by Vickers Armstrong Ltd. Two folding legs fit into slots on the front of the chair. On the right is the non-fume ashtray which can be completely removed for cleaning. The chair is fitted with the latest Sieve Gorman quick-release safety belt.*

LEFT: *The passenger chair evolved by Vickers Armstrong Ltd and BOAC. Twenty intermediate positions can be selected by means of the control levers at the front of the chair. The levers and chair movement are balanced so that the minimum of effort need be exerted by the passenger. The side wings and headrest are designed to give maximum comfort.*



LEFT: *The chair back can be folded flat after two pins have been removed. With the back in this position the chair can be easily manhandled in confined spaces and takes up less room for storage. The pocket for storing the meal tray and personal luggage can be seen.*



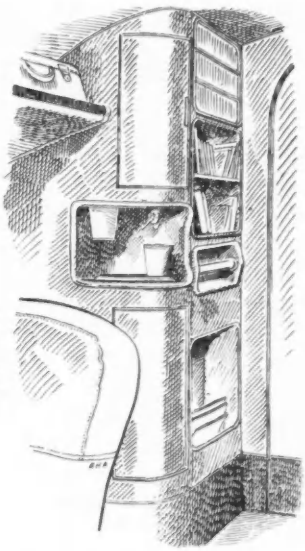
LEFT: *Unlike earlier designs the seat is lowered and tilted forward as the back is inclined, to give a high standard of passenger comfort.*

veniently stored in a large pocket with a zip-fastener at the back of the chair. A smaller pocket is provided for passengers' personal belongings.

Windows and fittings

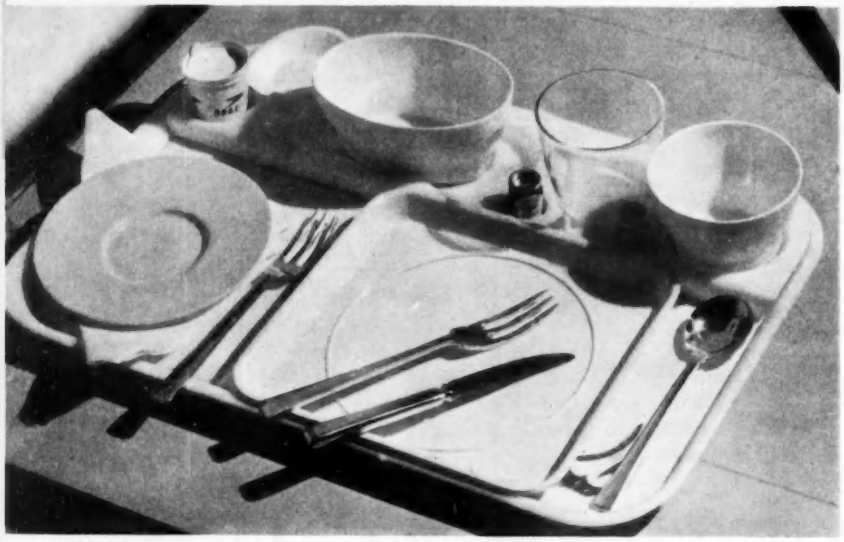
The passenger's view from his chair is almost as important as his comfort, and this has been fully taken into account in the design of the windows. Large and near rectangular in shape, they require PERSPEX of a special strength to resist the pressure of air. It is possible that the more usual oval shape, better suited to take the flow of air, will be used in later designs.

The light fittings, designed by de Havillands, are notable for their simplicity of appearance and ease with which they can be serviced. Above each pair of seats and clipped into position on the under surface of the luggage racks, there is a neatly designed unit containing the call button and reading-lamps. These lamps are arranged in pairs and may be adjusted to shine at any angle convenient to either or both of the passengers in adjacent chairs. The amber call buttons and light switches can be reached without difficulty by the seated passengers. Flat PERSPEX shades, specially designed for the COMET, cover the cabin lights, and these are held in place by means of two small screws. To prevent passengers from tripping, gangway lights are fitted at floor level.



The 'ship's library' at the end of the main cabin. Recessed into the corner is the water fountain where freshly filtered water is available.

One of the built-in features of the COMET is the 'ship's library'. This is situated at the end of the main cabin opposite the stewardess's station and contains book shelves and a magazine rack. Recessed into the corner of the library is a compactly designed water fountain where freshly filtered water is available.



The tray, plates and dishes are made of plastic and have been considered as a single design problem. The cutlery was specially designed for BOAC by Kenneth Holmes and N. R. G. Poynton, of Leicester College of Art, to suit the eating habits of different countries.

Decoration and colour

The colour scheme is standard and follows on the lines of other BOAC aircraft. It depends very largely on blue and grey and excludes restless and disturbing red. The wall coverings of light VYNYDE leather cloth made by Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd, and the curtains made by the Old Bleach Linen Co, are of a type already in use by the Corporation. They have been selected from samples submitted by several manufacturers and proved suitable from a practical point of view by a number of tests. To pass these tests the strength and quality of the materials must be of an extremely high standard, for they must be proof against light, flame and tropical vermin, absorbent of sound but not of water, durable, washable and suitable for simple mounting and dismounting.

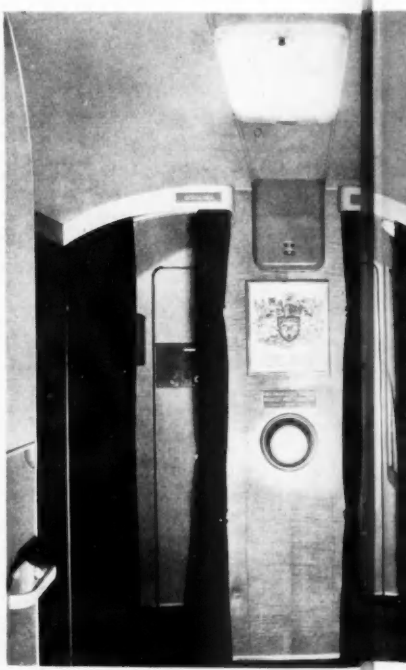
Apart from the discreet wave pattern on the window curtains there is no unnecessary decoration. There is a cool and unobtrusive harmony between the textiles, the wall covering and the grey PERSPEX mouldings produced by de Havillands at Hatfield.

Small cabin, vestibule and galley

The entrance to the aircraft is through the small vestibule at the rear of the main cabin. Here the designers have aimed at the welcoming effect of an hotel foyer, and wardrobes for coats and light luggage have been fitted. This is one of the innovations in the COMET, and the deep blue wardrobe curtains of wool gaberdine by Kellett, Woodman & Co, together with the sycamore panelling of the cabin doors succeed in creating the right atmosphere for the prospective traveller.

Forward of the main cabin is the small cabin where the proportions are determined structurally by a bulkhead, though this necessity has been turned to advantage in giving an intimate effect. The tables of plywood, with a plastic finish and aluminium supports with grips to allow easy removal, were designed with admirable simplicity by de Havillands.

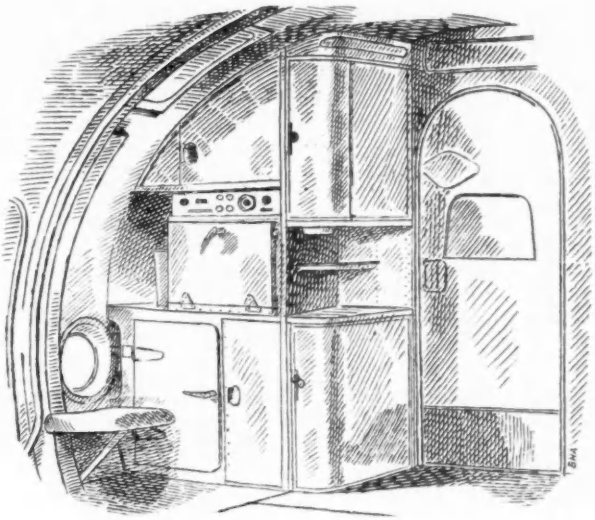
The entrance to the washrooms aft of the vestibule. Between the doors is an ashtray in which cigarettes are deposited before entry. The panelling on the doors is of sycamore and the curtains are of deep blue wool gaberdine by Kellett, Woodman & Co.



Standard and special features have been combined in the galley. The arrangement of the sink and plate-rack on one side with food storage and cooking apparatus on the other was planned by the BOAC Development Engineering Branch with the Catering Branch giving its suggestions. A standard GEC oven was used, and detail design of the cold box was carried out by de Havillands. Everything fits into an orderly scheme from the aluminium racks, exactly measured for cups, saucers and plates, to the curved corner food cupboard, with its interlacing trays. Sharp angles and projections are everywhere avoided as far as possible.

In both the trays and the dishes plastics have replaced pottery and the designs are standard for BOAC aircraft. The trays from Wokingham Plastics Ltd and the plates and dishes from Artid Plastics Ltd have been considered as a single design problem. Known as the GRACE pattern, the cutlery was specially designed for BOAC by Kenneth Holmes and N. R. G. Poynton, both of Leicester College of Art, to suit the eating habits of many nations. It is manufactured by Gladwin Ltd.

A good example of how to use limited space to maximum advantage can be seen in the layout of the washrooms. The furnishing here is not composed of standard manufacturers' items, except for upholstery and a few accessories. Washbasins, seats, mirrors and cupboards were designed and made at Hatfield and good use was made of coloured PERSPEX, a plastic easily moulded and produced for such items as wash-basins and cosmetic racks. The colour scheme in the ladies' powder room is a refreshing pink and grey.



A corner of the galley showing the standard GEC electric oven. The steward's seat can be folded down out of the way. Everything fits into an orderly scheme and sharp angles are everywhere avoided as far as possible.

Throughout the design there has been a close integration of the work of designer and engineer. The COMET has made aviation history by being the first jet airliner to go into regular passenger service. It has established a lead in British civil aviation which is now already recognised by overseas operators. It is likely that this lead will be strengthened when later versions of the COMET and the new turbo prop airliners are put into quantity production. The part that the interior designer will play in this programme is an important one, and one that both manufacturer and operator are not likely to ignore.

The men's washroom showing good use of limited space. Washbasins, seats, mirrors and cupboards were designed by de Havillands. Coloured PERSPEX *was used for basins, racks and drawer handles.*

J. M. Benoy

Smiths English Clocks Ltd

Although economical production in the clock and watch industry demands that few basic designs are made, manufacturers strive to satisfy the whims and fancies of their public. By relying too much on the more obvious expressions of public taste the scope for introducing contemporary design has not been exploited. This problem now facing the industry is discussed in the following article where it is suggested that the adoption of a deliberate design policy is the only practicable solution.

ABOVE: *A reproduction of the astronomical clock of St Mark's, Venice. The case of this clock of* 1908 *is built of white marble, with figures cast in brass. The time appears automatically in two apertures in the second tier, and a trumpeting angel marks the hours of* 3, 6, 9 *and* 12. *The whole structure measures* 12 *feet from base to spire and weighs approximately* 1½ *tons.*

FOR BEAUTY OF DESIGN, and for superb craftsmanship, the work of the many famous British clockmakers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has never been excelled. It is on record that, at one time, no less than 70,000, out of a population of under ten million, were directly or indirectly concerned in this country with clock- and watch-making. That this important and valuable industry dwindled and almost disappeared, was fundamentally due to the failure of the old craftsmen to adapt their craft to the machines that eventually enabled the German, Swiss, American and French industries to capture the market and, moreover, retain it for generations. In the 12 months preceding the last war, we imported over four million

RIGHT: 1952. *This pendulum master clock is accurate to plus or minus* 3 *seconds a week. It is used for controlling clocks in factories, offices and schools.*

clocks and over seven million watches. Since the war a large clock- and watch-making industry has once more been established in this country and in 1951, the Festival year, our production was over five million clocks and nearly two million watches. Today, as in the eighteenth century, the future of the industry depends on its ability to withstand foreign competition. It is not enough to produce cheaply and in quantity; production must be accompanied by a creative and enlightened design policy, initiated at the highest level.

In the year of the Great Exhibition, 1851, a little clock and watch shop was opened in Newington Causeway by Samuel Smith, an 'Expert in Horology', under the name of S. Smith and Son. The business prospered; soon there were Smiths Clock and Watch shops in Trafalgar Square, in Piccadilly, and no less than three in the Strand. A catalogue of the period issued by the firm claims that the stock comprises "the most wonderful watches of the day, Record Watches, Repeaters, Calendars, Clock Watches and Split-Seconds up to £450 each". Amongst the ornamental cased watches for ladies' wear, are some "taking the forms of Butterflies, Balls, Cherries, Pansies, Hearts, Scarabee, Nuts and Fruit". However, watches and clocks proved to be only a beginning. It was the late Sir Allan Gordon-Smith, the grandson of the founder, who, after serving an apprenticeship at his trade in Switzerland, joined his father as a manager and laid the foundations of the Smiths organisation as it exists today.

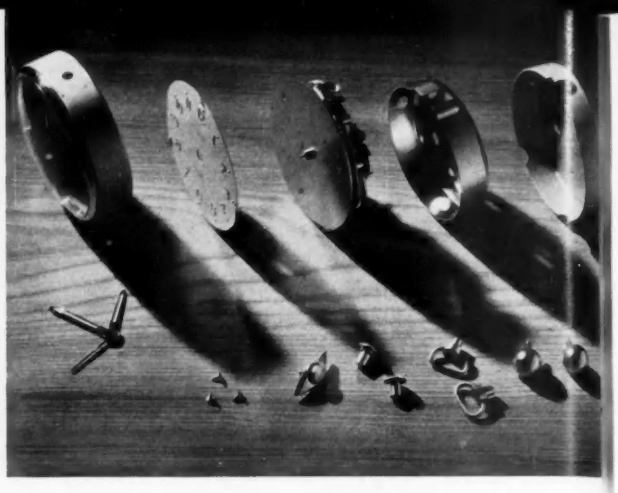
With the rapid rise in the popularity of motoring, the comparatively small resources of the firm became fully occupied with the production of speedometers, the first of which was sold to HM King Edward VII. At the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908, it was proudly claimed that Smiths "Perfect" speed indicator "has always been accepted as evidence in numerous Police Court cases". One model, registering up to 40 mph, sold at £12 12*s.* 0*d.*

The 1914–18 war gave a great impetus to instrument design and production not only for use in motor vehicles, but also in aircraft, and this phase of expansion continued steadily through the 'twenties. Many clock-making projects were also started, but failed owing to the free-trade policy of that time. In 1930, although the country was in the depths of a great trade depression, the imposition of a $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent *ad valorem* import tariff on clocks and watches, encouraged Smiths to make a further attempt to re-establish a clock-making industry. A special factory was erected at Cricklewood for the production of platform escapements for motor and domestic clocks, and the synchronous electric clock was introduced, together with 8-day and 30-hour hand-wound types. But a hard struggle lay ahead. In 1933 the Germans started war

BELOW: 1952. *Travel watch in a folding leather cloth case produced in assorted colours. The layout of the face is clear and simple and can be read easily. The contrasting band gives emphasis to the circle on which the minute divisions are marked.*

RIGHT: 1908. *Carriage clock, heavily gilt and hand-made throughout, with engraved front panel and hard enamel dial. Individual clocks of this type took two years to complete, and sold for* 100 *guineas.*

This group shows how one type of movement for an inexpensive alarm clock can be styled in different ways. The clock was first produced in 1948, and various types of anodised aluminium cases are available in blue, gold, green, pink and black.



The right-hand clock case in the adjoining photograph has been 'exploded' to demonstrate the styling designer's problem: the choice of a combination of case, dial, numerals and hands to fit an existing movement.

preparation. Export subsidies as high as 45 per cent enabled their clocks to be dumped into this country at prices well below the cost of production. By this means they hoped not only to build up their own war industries, but also to stifle progress in plants that might be used by us for instrument-making in war-time. Smiths, however, not only withstood this competition; they were able to absorb other less fortunate firms in the process, including the English Clock & Watch Co Ltd, the Enfield Clock Co Ltd, the U.K. Clock Co Ltd, the Clarion Clock Co Ltd, and the case-making business of J. E. V. Winterbourne. By 1939 Smiths were ready to play a major part in the war effort but, as the war progressed, their resources had to be considerably augmented to meet increasing demands. In recognition of the importance of instrument production in war-time, the Government declared that, as a matter of national policy, a clock- and watch-making industry should be developed and maintained after the war, and it was this statement that encouraged Smiths to undertake the peace-time production of clocks and watches on a large scale.

Post-war developments

Since the war, the Smiths organisation, grown to vast proportions, has been grouped into four main divisions under the control of the parent company, S. Smith & Sons (England) Ltd. These divisions are Smiths Motor Accessories Ltd, Smith Aircraft Instruments Ltd, Smiths Industrial Instruments Ltd, and last, but not least, Smiths English Clocks Ltd. The marine instrument side of the business is undertaken by the Kelvin & Hughes Ltd group of companies. Today S. Smith & Sons Ltd is the largest concern in the world devoted to the manufacture of instruments, clocks and watches, and as such it provides employment for approximately 14,000 people.

The post-war production achievements of Smiths English Clocks Ltd merit examination. A vast range of clocks and watches, from a ladies' wrist watch with a 14 mm. dial to the largest type of tower clock, are designed and manufactured. Borrowing from Swiss experience, production follows the principle of specialisation. Separate factories, 13 in all, are devoted to the manufacture of clock and watch movements, clock and watch cases, hairsprings, jewels and escapements. Although dispersed throughout the country, these factories in fact form a complete industry under one head. For instance, high grade 17-jewel lever watches and hair-springs are manufactured in different factories at Cheltenham; popular grade pocket and wrist watches, and strikes and chimes, in South Wales; synchronous electric and 8-day clocks at Cricklewood; process timers and industrial clocks at Brighton and in London; alarm clocks at Wishaw, and horological and instrument jewels at Carfin, both in Larnarkshire. In most respects the machine-made or mass-produced watch or clock is superior to those made in the past by skilled craftsmen, whose individual standards of workmanship could not achieve the very close tolerances that nowadays are specified and realised in order to ensure complete interchangeability of parts, speed of assembly and the minimum use of expert labour on final adjustment. This is well illustrated at the Wishaw factory, where hand-wound alarm clocks are made by highly mechanised and unique mass-production

LEFT: *A medium price wrist watch first produced in* 1948. *The stainless steel case is slender and presents an easily read face with raised gilt Arabic numerals and gilt hands.*
RIGHT: *Inexpensive wrist watch first produced in* 1945. *The case of stainless steel encloses a silvered dial with luminous Arabic numerals.*

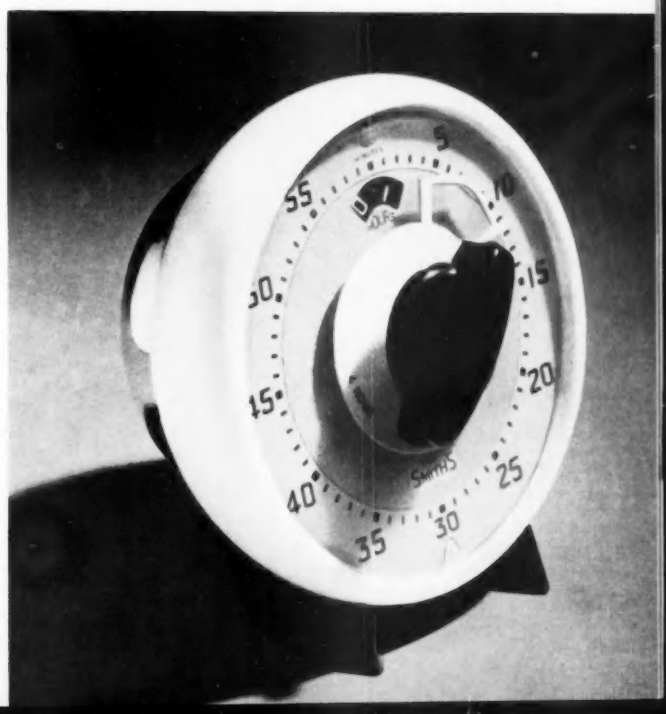
methods at a rate at present of just under ten thousand clocks each working day. Space does not permit a detailed description of a layout and process that promises, under normal working conditions, an output per pound in wages as high or higher than any continental factory. Suffice it to say that the production plan is based on the elimination of skilled operations by the use of special purpose machinery, of mechanical handling, and of automatic tools and finishing, on a scale never before attempted in this industry. Since each operation is broken down to give a cycle time of only $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds the period spent in training is considerably reduced, and operators quickly achieve a high rate of automatic movement.

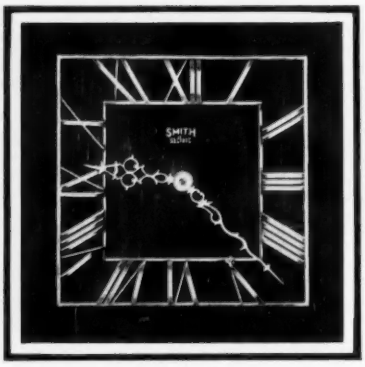
Heterogeneous designs

But the mass-production, in long and economical runs, of movements is only part of the problem. One type of movement can be 'styled' in hundreds of different designs of case, dial and hands. Certain of Smiths movements have, with very little modification, been manufactured for 20 years or more, but every year they are offered with new cases and faces. An analysis of a section of a recent catalogue shows a range of 50 different cases fitted with electric, 30-hour and 8-day movements. There are 11 styles of numeral and 15 styles of hand, illustrated in these 50 examples. The pitfalls to be avoided in the technique of choosing a combination of case, dial, numerals and hands, were well illustrated in the eighteenth century. The development of cheaper methods of production, and the standardisation of movements, during that period led to a deterioration in appearance and finish, particularly in cases and dials. We can see how the ornamentation of the dial adversely affected legibility; how hour and minute numerals competed in importance; how hands became elaborated and lost their functional shape. Are these pitfalls being avoided today?

The quantities required of different designs of case may vary enormously. Price is clearly an important factor, but by no means decisive. Quite often two designs, forecast to sell in approximately equal quantities, will have an astonishingly different reception; the sales of one may only amount to a few hundred, as compared with many thousands of the other. No less than four million of one design of mantel clock, and one million of a particular wall clock, have been sold to date. Yet there is little to distinguish these from other designs that do not sell nearly as well. It is a very difficult matter to gauge

BELOW: *A new product from Smiths' factories is this four-hour timer for industrial and domestic use. The circular, tapered case is moulded in plastic and mounted on a horseshoe plastic base. Though simple in layout, the dial has an aggressive modernity often associated with motor-car dash-boards.*





The MARS *wall clock. Note the unpleasant combination of modernistic and traditional features. The numerals have to be distorted to fit into the square shape of the face. Legibility is affected by the elaborate Baroque curves of the hands and the lack of five minute intervals clearly defined.*

The DOVER *was designed in* 1933 *and has a moulded* BAKELITE *case. The numerals have been emphasised to improve legibility though the proportions are not entirely successful. The similarity between the hour and minute hands is confusing.*

The ORION, *first produced in* 1949, *is finished in gilt or bronze and is flush fitting to the wall. Designed for those who consider numerals unnecessary the effect is somewhat harsh and modernistic, though the hour and minute hands can be easily distinguished.*

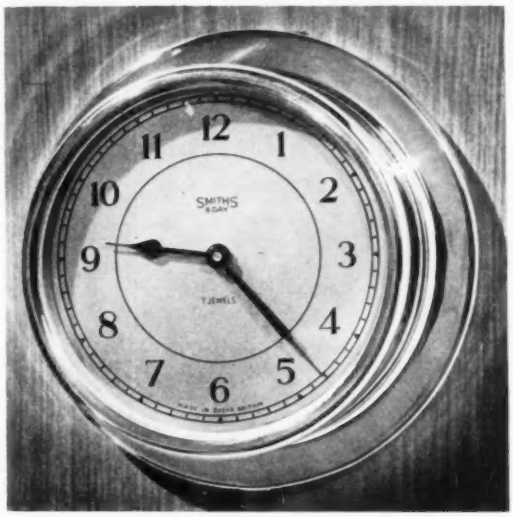
public taste. Generally speaking, clocks and watches are today regarded very much as fashion lines. The trade and the public buy primarily on the appearance of the case, dial and hands, and take the quality of the movement for granted if it is made by a reputable firm. While the taste of the public has undoubtedly improved in recent years, it is still true to say that the majority tend to reject what is new because it is unfamiliar. The firm maintains that public demand is reflected in the catalogue. Although the models illustrated range from the frankly traditional to the purely functional, a very high proportion show, aesthetically, a strictly conservative approach. It is the opinion of the firm that there is little demand as yet for contemporary styles.

Style after function

The design of clock and watch movements is the responsibility of the chief horological engineer, who is a director of the company. He controls a research design department and an engineering design department. Of the latter, one section deals with watch movements, and the other with clock movements, again subdivided into handwound and electric types. Appearance design, or styling, is divorced from movement design, and is in the hands of the chief designer (styling). His scope is limited by his inability to submit case prototypes until the movement is completed. He can only exert a minor influence on the size and shape of the movement. Considerations of cost, the need for standardisation and long production runs are determining factors. All departments, in their respective spheres, make a careful study of trends in design, in the use of materials, and in manufacturing processes, throughout the world. Developments affecting furnishing schemes, styles and finishes, are closely followed, in order to meet a demand for clocks to harmonise with their surroundings. Special designs for overseas markets are largely based on advice tendered by the company's overseas branches, representatives and agents. Prototypes of such designs are often submitted to them for an opinion before production is authorised. At home, too, the views of the trade, and a cross-section of public opinion, are sought before a new style is launched. In fact, if a new model does not involve heavy tooling costs, pilot or trial quantities may be made up and issued, and their reception analysed, before embarking on a long-term programme of production.

Appearance design is considered at a committee over which the sales director presides. Members include the chief designer (styling), home and export sales executives, chief development engineer, the senior works managers, product engineers, and the advertising and public relations managers. At meetings of this committee the chief designer (styling) senses what is required, prepares designs and, in due course, prototypes. Many dozens of styles of cases, dials and hands may be considered before even one combination is approved for a particular type of clock or watch. Even then, a decision is dependent on the opinion of the factory executives regarding the suitability of a style for manufacture, and whether it can be produced within the cost allowed.

New models and prototypes are then brought

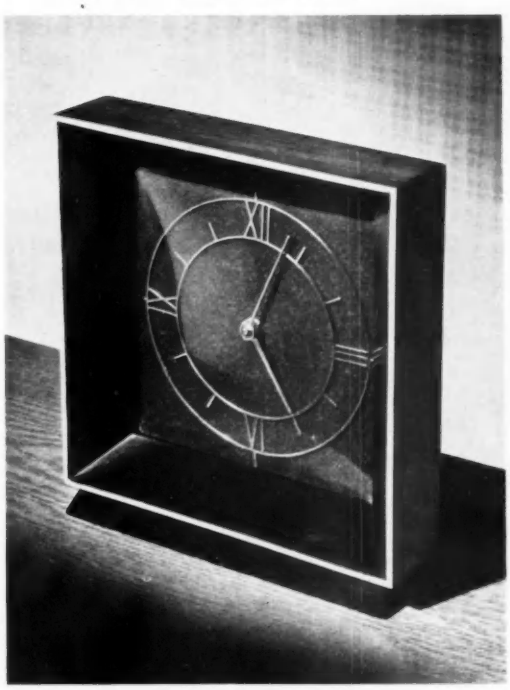


before a monthly development meeting at which all senior executives are present. The chairman of the company takes the chair, and amongst those present are the general manager, sales director, chief engineer, chief horological engineer, chief development and research engineer, the senior works managers, product engineers and service manager. The sales executives outline the likely public reaction to new models, and at succeeding meetings the progress of each design is continuously reviewed until production is finally authorised. The committee also considers the service department's reports detailing the reasons for the return of any faulty products, and orders a change in design if faults exceed a predetermined percentage. In such cases, the modification becomes automatically a development project, and is progressed, in the same manner as new products, at the monthly meetings. When production is authorised, responsibility for the final manufacturing specifications, methods, routine, tooling-up and costing, whether of new products or of a modification, rests with the development and research engineering department, and the engineers and works managers concerned.

The chairman's design policy

It is a great advantage that the chairman of the company should be personally concerned in the aesthetic, as well as the functional, qualities of the company's designs before they go into production. His influence can reconcile the often conflicting requirements of the technical and sales executives. Ultimately, his is the greater responsibility, as he is concerned with the business risks involved in a particular decision. It is with a full appreciation of these risks that one notes the somewhat conservative approach to public demand and to public taste. Market requirements appear to have been assessed more on past experience rather than future trends. Clearly, designs must sell, and public demand and taste cannot be entirely ignored. Nevertheless, attempts can and should be made to win the public to new ideas. Such ideas, as in a contemporary style, can only be introduced slowly, but experience has shown that a design can achieve both commercial and artistic success, and yet be 'new'. Both at home and overseas public taste is steadily improving. The demand is increasing for products that are more satisfying aesthetically. The range may be as wide as ever, whether traditional, popular or experimental, but good design should be present in all three styles. Good design is good business, and there is so much that Smiths English Clocks Ltd, with their reputation for quality and fine technical achievements, can do to influence public taste.

ABOVE LEFT: *The case of this cabin clock, first produced in 1951, is of spun brass and the hanging plate fits flush to the back. The dial is simple and pleasing and the hands are delicate and well balanced.* BELOW: *A prototype for a new clock that presents interesting features. The black ebony case frame is picked out by an ivory line. The dial carries polished gilt indicators and hands on a matt burgundy background.*

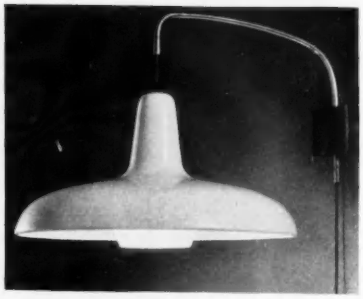


This feature offers a selection of goods up to the standard acceptable for 'Design Review', the photographic index of current British products that is open for inspection at the London headquarters of the CoID.

REVIEW of CURRENT DESIGN

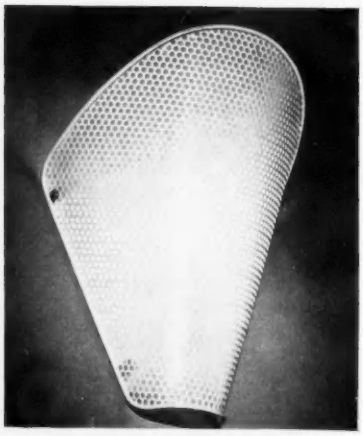
Manufacturers in a wide range of durable consumer goods are invited to submit their new products for inclusion in 'Design Review'. Enquiries should be addressed to Mark Hartland Thomas, Chief Industrial Officer, Council of Industrial Design.

Rayon and cotton satin print, GREEN PARK. *A pictorial subject skilfully expressed in the convention of a repetitive pattern, and enhanced by careful draughtsmanship and amusing changes of scale.* Designer: T. Bradley. Maker: Story & Co. (Wholesale) Ltd.



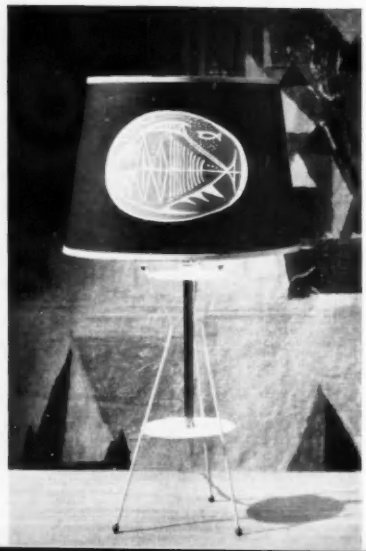
Three-light pendant with white or champagne opal glass shades, cup of hardwood and metalwork anodised gold, copper or silver. Designer: Paul Boissevain. Maker: The Merchant Adventurers Ltd.

Playcastle, made of beech, natural finish, designed for perfect safety and full bodily exercise. Thorough and sympathetic study of function, combined with good taste, produces a noble piece of furniture. Designer: Walter Lines. Maker: Lines Bros. Ltd.



Wall-light with 16-inch aluminium reflector and small opal glass to reduce glare: satin silver swinging arm and hardwood backplate. Designer: Paul Boissevain. Maker: The Merchant Adventurers Ltd.

The curves of the timber and upholstery which are so attractive to the eye can be further justified by their regard for construction, comfort and convenience in use. Designer: A. J. Milne. Maker: E. Horace Holme Ltd.

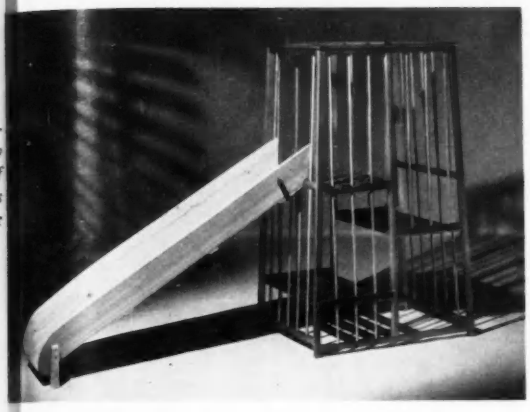


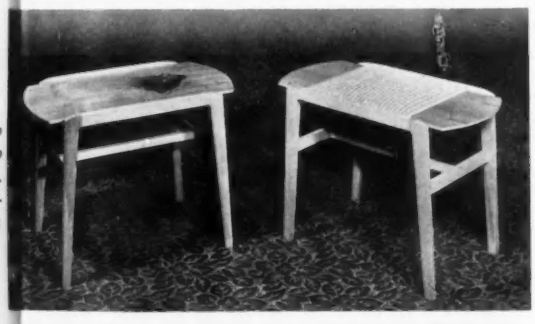
Shade of perforated metal backed with textile diffuser, so as to relieve indirect lighting with sparkle whilst avoiding dazzle. Maker: F. Thomas & Company Ltd.

An occasional table with the top reversible to make a stool and padded. The table-top is veneered in walnut and the rest is beech. The design is smart without being overdone. Designer: Leslie Matthew. Maker: E. Kahn & Co. Ltd.

The undercarriage has been detailed with a graceful intricacy in the full light of the lamp itself. Designers: R. C. Hiscock and Philip Pound. Maker: Hiscock, Appleby & Co.

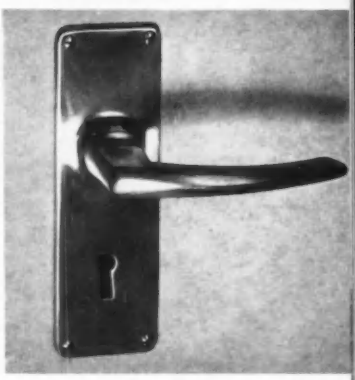
A high-backed settle in modern dress: the stiff severity of the original is given a jaunty air with the splayed feet and back, the upturned arms and the particoloured upholstery. Designer: Howard B. Keith. Maker: H.K. Furniture Ltd.





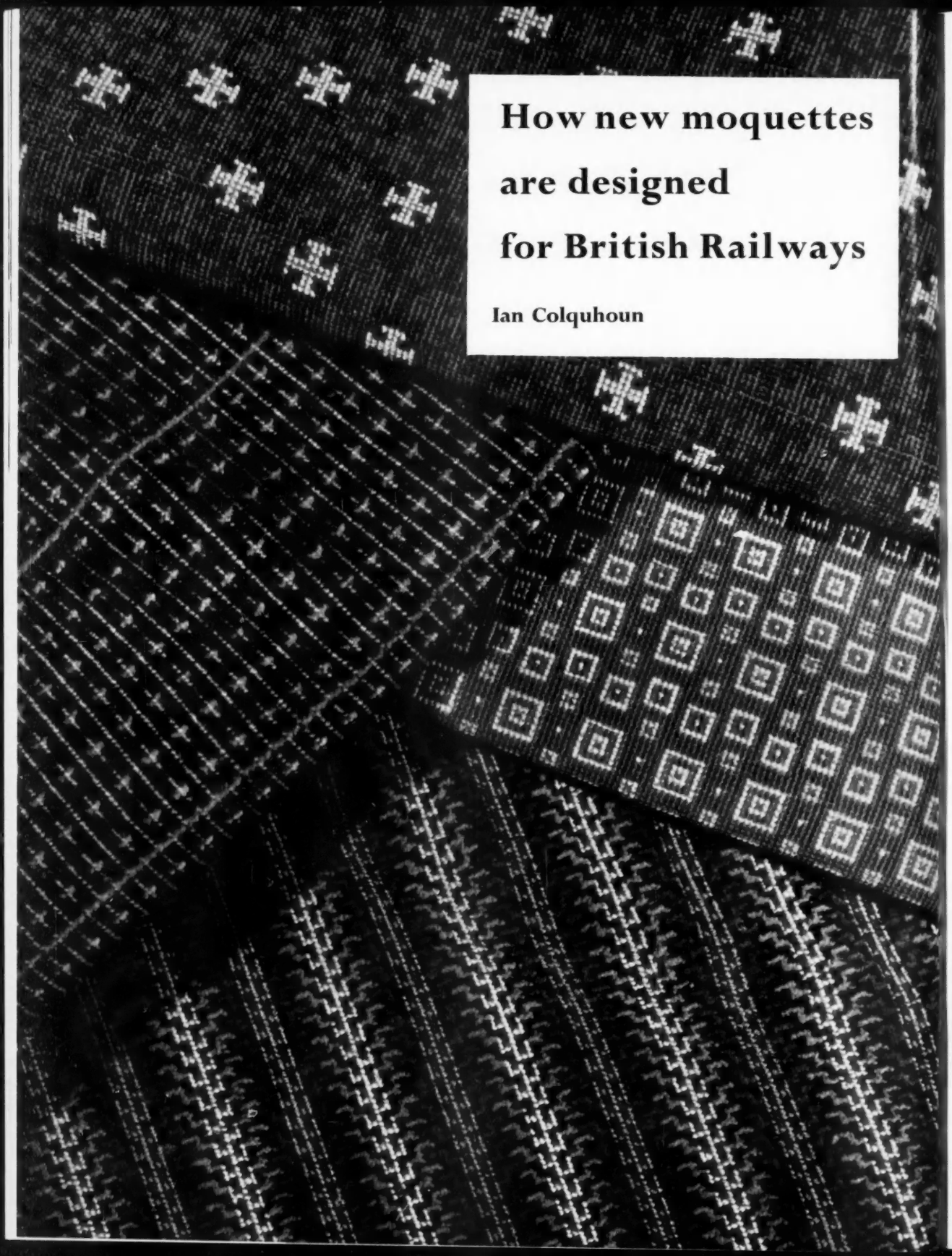
Automatic water heater, thermostatically controlled. Any solid fuel will do. Requires refuelling twice in 24 hours and has several labour-saving features. It is not cheap, but it claims to provide its own hire-purchase payments out of the fuel that it saves. Maker: The Esse Cooker Company.

Gas Cooker. The panel at the top of the backplate pulls down and reveals an eye-level griller. This, a great advantage in itself, also allows the oven to be raised into a better position, leaving room for warming in a drawer at the bottom. Designers: A. F. Oatley, G. A. Oatley, S. H. Smith. Maker: Cannon Iron Foundries Ltd.



In production since 1935, but still has few equals – the reward of first-rate designing. Made of hot-pressed brass in various metal finishes with or without keyholes: also with circular rose and separate escutcheon. The handle, straight or curved in, is comfortable to grip and unpretentious. Designer: Roger Peach. Maker: Dryad Metal Works Ltd.

Gas water-heater. The air inlet and the flue outlet are behind the heater direct to outer atmosphere, completely separate from the room, avoiding all danger to health and damage to decorations. Having achieved inoffensive performance, the designers have styled their heater unobtrusively so that one can 'fit and forget' it. Maker: Ascot Gas Water Heaters Ltd.



How new moquettes are designed for British Railways

Ian Colquhoun

LEFT:
Patterns from the latest range of moquettes, designed 1952 by the architect's department of the Railway Executive. Top and centre, right, two uncut cloths using the Maltese cross and hollow squares in simple repeats. Left, centre, a combination cloth using a single end of uncut pile running through the centres of the figures. Bottom, a mixture of cut and uncut pile in simple stripes across the piece.

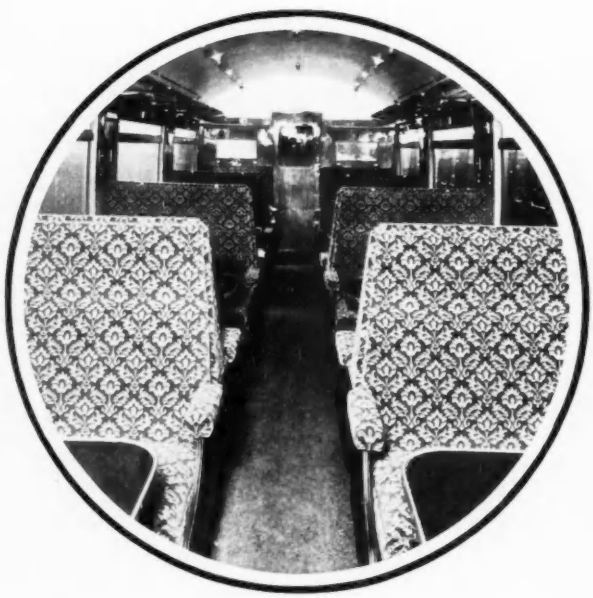
BELOW:
Pre-war Southern Railway third-class saloon coach, still in service. The style of the moquette is related to the rich Edwardian pattern, right, which is still used by the Western Region, although designed before the war for the GWR.

In our issue for November 1952, Ian Colquhoun surveyed the industrial design work carried out by the architect's office of the Railway Executive. In this article, which deals specifically with moquettes, Mr Colquhoun shows how he has collaborated with the staff designer at the weaving mill to produce designs which are advanced both technically and aesthetically.

BEFORE NATIONALISATION MOQUETTE PATTERNS were generally chosen from a range of manufacturer's samples by the chief mechanical engineer of the railway company and subjected to the approval of the general manager. The companies themselves would not control the designs, beyond indicating the colour and type of cloth required.

This process naturally produced very uneven results between the companies, since, as with the design of the rolling stock, they depended on those who made the final choice; but even the best designs were frequently spoilt by the colours. Among the main line companies the GWR preserved an air of traditional smoking-room comfort with its rich Florentine patterns, still in use on the Western Region. The same type of design was used by the Southern Railway in its third class stock and although this company, together with the London & North-Eastern, made some unfortunate experiments between the wars with flowered and modernistic designs, in general it can be said that railway moquettes have always been better both in design and colour than those of the bus and coach trade.

Specially designed patterns were used in the Silver Jubilee and Coronation trains by the LNER and the LMS, but the first widespread use of patterns designed outside the industry was made by the LMS at the end of the war.



A special coach of modernistic design produced by the LNER for the Coronation in 1937: the moquettes have a specially designed simple pattern.

The architect to the company had considerable influence in the design of rolling stock interiors and designed a new range of moquettes in standard colours which is still in use on the Midland Region. The figures are small and neat, squares, rectangles, ovals and stripes simply arranged in small repeats: the colours, maroon and straw on grey-blue for first-class, are reversed to blue and straw on maroon for third-class, and they are echoed in curtains and carpets in the dining cars.

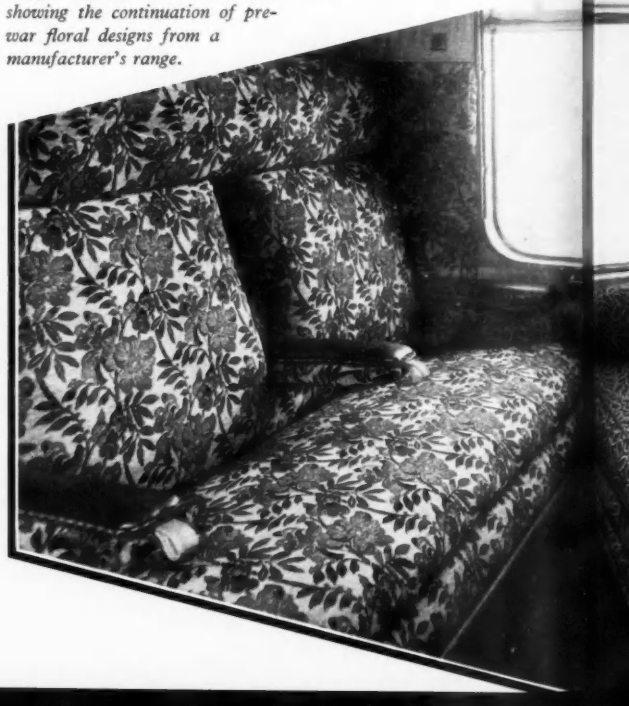
After nationalisation, when designs for the new standard corridor coach were being prepared, the architect to the Executive was asked to submit new patterns for the moquettes. With no previous experience or knowledge of the processes and potentialities involved in moquette weaving, it was necessary to approach the problem from the beginning. In the first place, substitute materials of various types such as plastic and nylon cloths were considered, but nothing was found, or has yet been found, to equal the wool moquette's resistance to dirt, wear and misuse. It should be noted here that the average life of a coach is 36 years, during which it is refitted only three times, or once every nine years.

Technical considerations

For inspiration there were the architect-designed post-war LMS patterns and a variety of very satisfactory London Transport bus and underground coach designs, besides a large range of manufacturers' patterns. But the design of a railway moquette is a different problem from that of designing for a bus or an underground train. As the passenger may have to sit opposite a pattern for as long as seven hours, it must not be too obtrusive, too large in scale, too simple or too complicated, too hot or too cold in colour, too easily marked or too easily damaged. A practical consideration is that a small pattern in small repeats is easier and more economical for the trimmer to cut out for upholstery. The moquette is woven on a Jacquard loom to a width of 50 inches, and the maximum repeat across the piece is therefore $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, which can be subdivided into smaller multiples as required. Theoretically it is possible to repeat at any distance in the length, but in practice the balance of the pattern and the appearance of the finished compartment restrict this to the width of the seat unit, say 15 to 20 inches, with a maximum of 27 inches. These various conditions, practical as well as psychological, governed the designs from the first. But, in addition, the carriage standards committee, following a well-established railway precedent, proposed that the cloths should be of uncut pile in botany quality in the first-class and of cut pile in the third-class (the velvet finish generally gives better wear).

With these conditions in mind, and after considering existing patterns in sample and in use, work was begun on the new designs. It was felt that repeats should be quite large, that background and figure should be broken up and well balanced, and that colours should be medium in weight and tone: all this to absorb excessive dirt-marking. For pattern, although it is clear that any figure will form a pattern in the piece if only because of the succession of repeats, it was felt that we should aim at a more disciplined

1945–6: LMS third-class compartment showing the continuation of pre-war floral designs from a manufacturer's range.

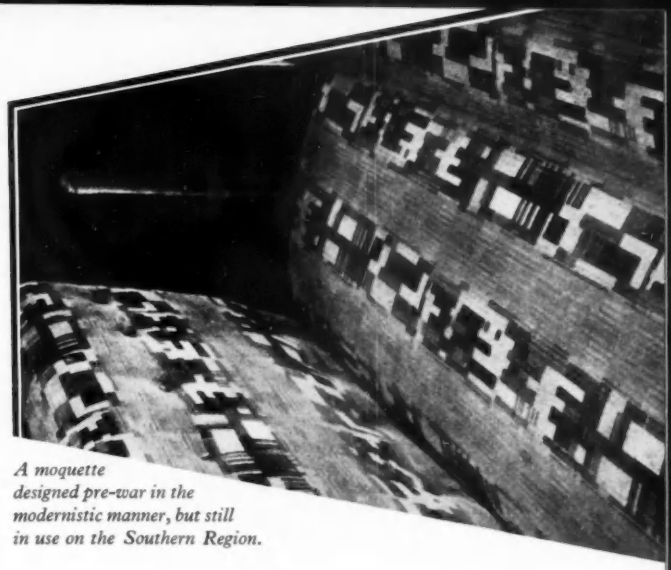


effect, and that the individual unit of the pattern should be a relatively formal figure in itself.

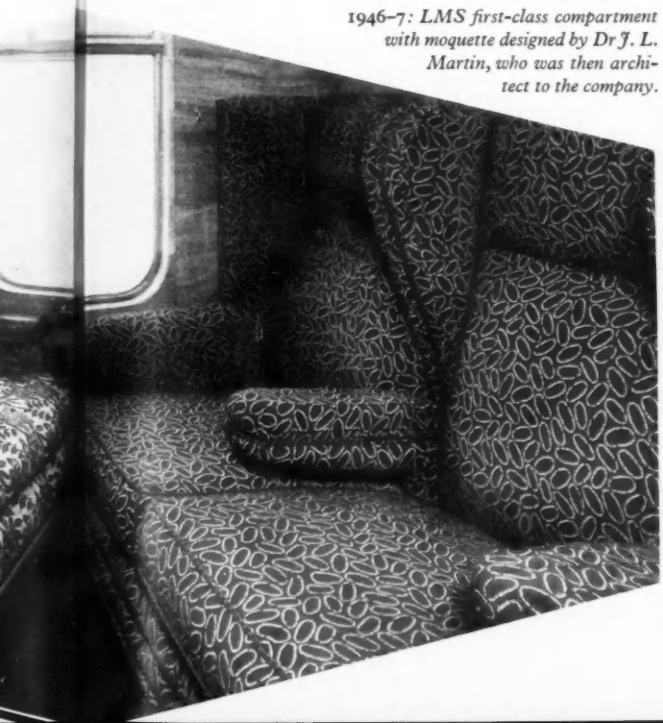
The designs were two-dimensional only, bearing little relation to the correct repeats, prepared on tracing paper and then printed. These were discussed with representatives and designers of two of the railway contractors, T. F. Firth & Sons Ltd and John Holdsworth & Co Ltd, who agreed to make up samples on the basis of these sketches, interpreting them as appeared most suitable. Following this, colour sketches were prepared with a number of different colours: but the standards committee then stipulated that blue should be used for the first-class and red for third, therefore no exact control of colour schemes was attempted in these first patterns. One of the assistant architects in fact spent a day at Firth's mills choosing colour combinations from a standard range of yarn tufts, at the same time following the process of manufacture right through from the washing of the raw wool to the weaving of the cloth. But it was found very difficult to choose colours in this way without regard to the proportions and weight of each in the finished piece, and in further experiments, as will be seen, the suggested colours have been put on paper at the first design stage.

Results of the first batch

The results of these early attempts were much better than might have been expected, due mainly to the work of the firms' designers, who say, in fact, that it is never possible to judge a pattern with certainty until the cloth comes off the loom. In cloth, the larger patterns are too large in scale or not sufficiently broken, and the leaf patterns are not satisfactory; one of these was woven the wrong way up by mistake, and consequently runs the length of the seat instead of from top to bottom. Also the colours, which reflect the 'medium weight and tone' theory referred to above, seem neither robust nor definite enough to give character to the compartments.



A moquette designed pre-war in the modernistic manner, but still in use on the Southern Region.



1946–7: *LMS first-class compartment with moquette designed by Dr J. L. Martin, who was then architect to the company.*

It is probably a mistake to limit the basic colours to two only. While first-class patterns should be distinct from third-class, any attempt to identify class or type of compartment by colour will never be as successful as the use of numbers or labels which are more readily looked for by the public. It was obvious from the first that one design would often look better in one colour or one type of finish (cut, uncut or combination pile) than another, so much so that neither the decision on colour nor that on finish was rigidly adhered to in these patterns or subsequent ones. Restriction of the range of patterns is also a pity although a reasonable balance must be struck, but the size of the railway contracts means that the manufacturer might weave as little as 1,200 yards (60 pieces) of a particular pattern.

It was interesting to see how the same design could be interpreted by different manufacturers, and results often depended on the types of loom in use. While one manufacturer concentrated on cut, uncut, or combination pile simply striped across the piece, the other made use of two heights of pile and broché work, cut and uncut to follow the lines of the figure. Much was learnt about the ways of adding interest to a pattern by the fullest use of the loom. For example, a combination cut and uncut cloth has the effect of an

ABOVE: *The* SEASHORE *design from the first batch of patterns designed for the standard corridor coach by the architect's department. A cut pile cloth in blue and grey with maroon overcheck for use in first-class compartments.*

BELOW: *The* BOOMERANG *design, also from the first batch, but for third-class use. A combination cloth in red, coral and grey.*

extra colour without using an extra frame, because the cut pile, according to the direction of the light falling on the cloth appears darker than the uncut. Again, the use of 'planted' colours, twisted or marled yarn, two heights of pile, end and end weaving and broché work, all add a subtle variety by economical means, since the more frames in use the higher the cost of the cloth.

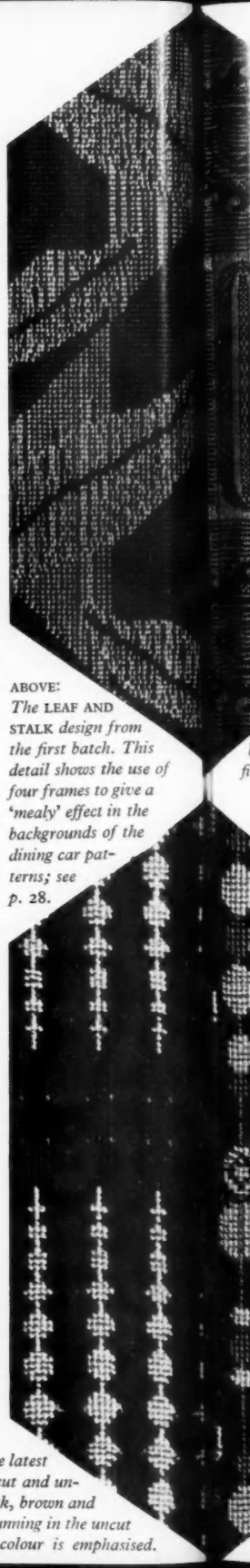
At this stage, in order to meet the production programme, it was necessary to select patterns without further loss of time. A range of nine patterns was chosen (four first-class and five third-class) and standardised for new main line stock and, in particular, certain Festival of Britain trains such as the 'Red Rose', the 'Merchant Venturer', and the 'Royal Wessex'. But before the cloths were finally woven, some small colour changes were made, because once the cards for the looms are cut according to the design, colours can be changed within that design. Fawns and beiges, favourite secondary colours, were thought to look too drab with the warm shades of red chosen: these were replaced by cool greys, ivory or yellow.

Dining car moquettes

The next samples were made for the dining car chairs and for future use on other small seats. Up to this time the LMS post-war dining car had been retained almost unchanged except for the use of one of the new moquettes in the third-class. But new carpets had already been designed in the architect's office, so that moquettes had to be prepared to suit these.

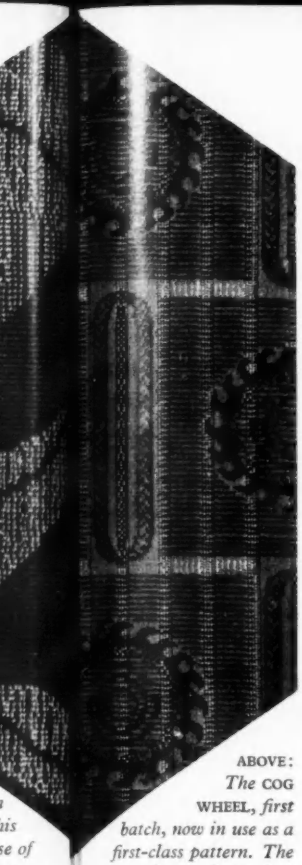
Here the type of pattern is not so important since it is unlikely to occupy the eye for so long: but it should be in scale with the chair and preferably of uncut pile for reasons of cleanliness. The new design therefore followed the lines of the LMS range with simple geometrical figures in small repeats. The drawings this time were made on tracing paper to the approximate finished size of the pattern, and the colours shown or described with reference to the carpet samples.

T. F. Firth and Sons Ltd prepared the samples, which were to be in uncut pile. To counteract the simplicity of the figures we were particularly anxious to provide an interesting background by using an effect from the first batch of patterns. In this process, a variation of end and end weaving, two colours are run side by side in the cloth to give a random 'mealy' effect produced by using half of one frame with half of another.

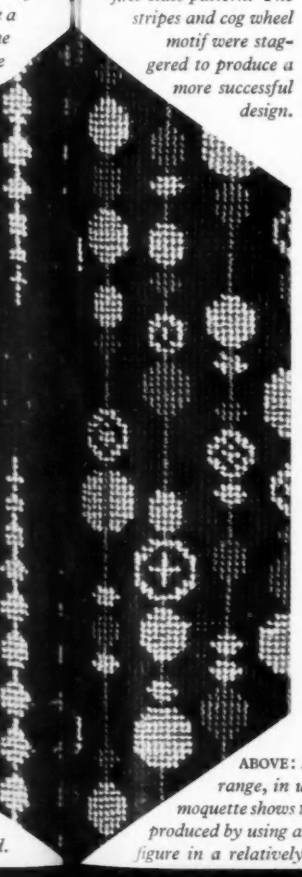


ABOVE: *The* LEAF AND STALK *design from the first batch. This detail shows the use of four frames to give a 'mealy' effect in the backgrounds of the dining car patterns;* *see p. 28.*

ABOVE: *From the latest range, 1952, a cut and uncut cloth in black, brown and grey-blue. By running in the uncut cloth the light colour is emphasised.*



ABOVE: *The* COG WHEEL, *first batch, now in use as a first-class pattern. The stripes and cog wheel motif were staggered to produce a more successful design.*



ABOVE: *From the same range, in uncut pile, this moquette shows the richer effect produced by using a complex small figure in a relatively large repeat.*

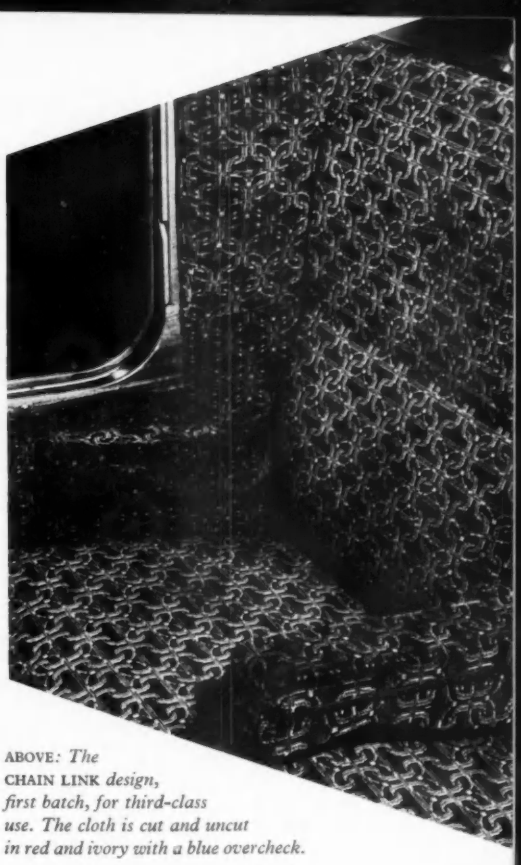
Unfortunately the development of these patterns was again checked while it was in progress. Early in 1951, the price of yarn rose very steeply and the Executive decided not to use the more expensive types such as four-frame moquettes and botany cloth for first-class carriages. Some of the new patterns affected in this way were discontinued, while others were made as three-frame cloths where possible. The third-class diner pattern was continued for it represented only small quantities of cloth. In spite of this setback the results were very interesting in colour and texture; but the restriction on coach building in 1952 means that none of them has yet appeared in service.

Further developments

Since the production of samples takes about six months, another range of patterns was undertaken in 1952 so that new ones might be at hand if required. The designs for these were based on a new idea of pattern and colour, which to some extent went back to the older railway practice of using melton cloths in blacks, crimsons, browns and dark blues. The range was based on dark backgrounds, black, navy, blackberry and eggplant (British Colour Council colours) relieved by small figures in brilliant colours such as crimson, flame red, peacock and turquoise blues, violet, lilac, rifle green, mustard, primrose and grey. The figures themselves took the form of Maltese crosses, herring-bone weaves, interlocking crankshaft forms, hollow squares diminishing in series, and other patterns in small repeats.

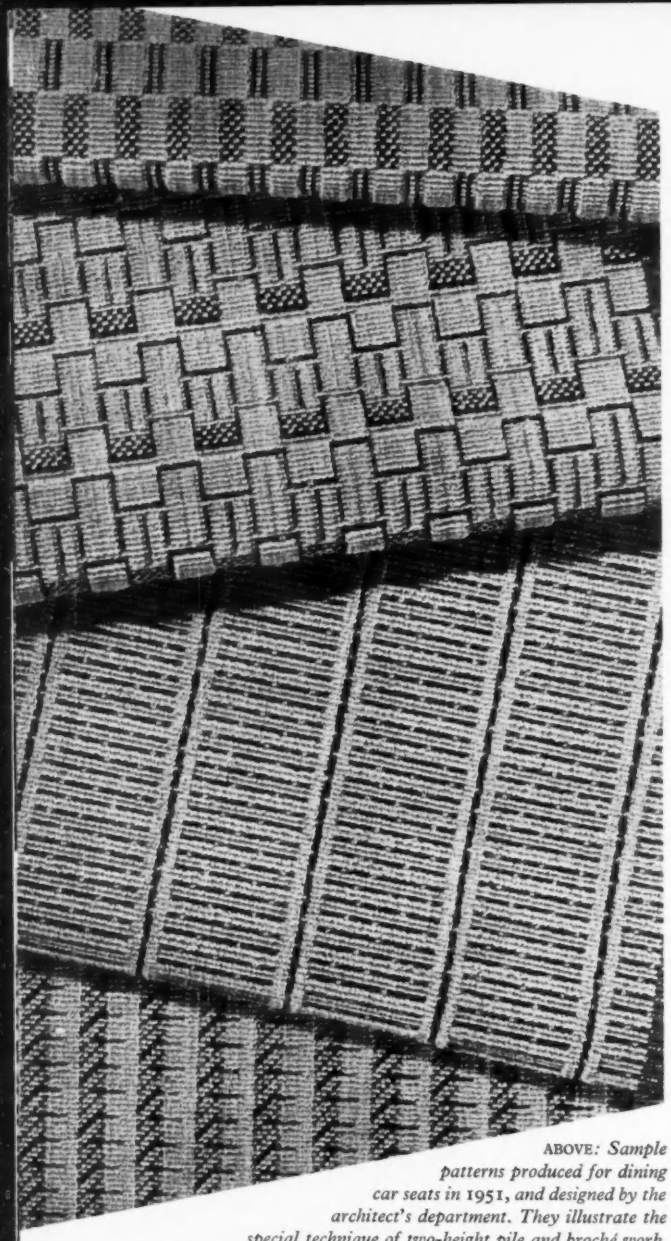
The samples were prepared by another railway contractor who had not previously worked to the architect's designs (John A. Wood Ltd). The designs themselves were set out in greater detail than before by drawing on tracing paper over point paper with an approximate allowance for distortion in the loom. These were fully coloured and were then discussed by the architect with the manufacturer. Treatment of the pile took the form of cutting across the piece in regular stripes of three cut to three uncut ends (ordinary combination pile), or in such a way as to leave only one uncut end running through the centre of each series of figures (a suggestion which proved unsatisfactory because the folding over of the cut pile at each side would soon hide the uncut end). Those colours, which could not be matched from the manufacturer's range, were given British Colour Council notations and specially dyed.

The new range produced some very interesting and unusual cloths. The use of bright colours in small



ABOVE: *The* CHAIN LINK *design, first batch, for third-class use. The cloth is cut and uncut in red and ivory with a blue overcheck.*

BELOW: *The* OCTOPUS *design in the first batch for third-class compartments. The cloth is uncut in red, coral and ivory.*

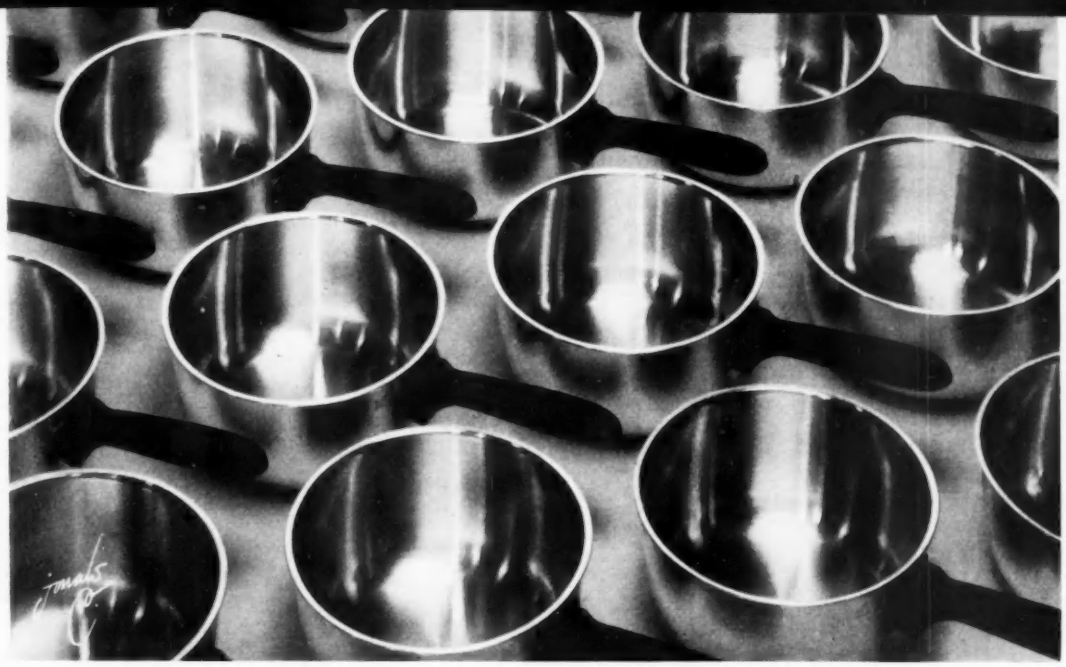


ABOVE: *Sample patterns produced for dining car seats in* 1951, *and designed by the architect's department. They illustrate the special technique of two-height pile and broché work, which was substituted for the four-frame effect originally planned.*

quantities on black gives an added sparkle to the cloth, without detracting from its serviceability; the grey (BCC 364) and the primrose (BCC 69) proved particularly successful alternatives to the conventional fawns or straw colours. As regards pattern, the cumulative effect of a very small figure seems to give the rich over-all pattern that was intended, while the substitution of a hollow or linear type for one which is solid gives an added stereoscopic effect. In such cases the cloth is not separated rigidly into ground and figure, but the ground colour is allowed to flow into and through the figure.

The patterns so far produced and the knowledge gained have given rise to many ideas for future developments. It is clear that successful patterns are more easily achieved when the design is set out in as much detail as possible, but, in working in this way, the manufacturer must be able to alter the design or the colours before or during the weaving process if it seems advisable. To weave a large batch of samples may cost several hundred pounds, and the results so far owe a great deal to the co-operation of the firms involved. But there seems to be plenty of scope in moquettes, in particular for the development of backgrounds which are interesting in themselves. The random effect of tweed, for instance, can and has been produced, but it has not often been used for an all-over ground. Flecked, dotted or checked grounds are also possible, each square or rectangle being not much larger than one or two tufts of the pile, and the two colours being so near in tone that they blend into one except on close inspection. Examples might be black with slate blue, maroon or rifle green. With all these, however, any pattern must obviously be very simple: regular figures, stripes or lines would be sufficient.

BELOW: *The* LEAF AND STALK *design as now used showing the figure running in the wrong direction. It was not designed for this purpose, a smaller pattern having been prepared.*



1 *These standardised* BAKELITE *handles can be used on a variety of pots and pans; produced by Dansk Aluminium Industri A/S*

A Danish designer in practice

Erik Herlow

TODAY, SEVERAL INDUSTRIES IN DENMARK have realised the value of establishing contacts with industrial design consultants. This is particularly the case with firms which require expert advice on design problems at short notice, but which have found that the employment of a full-time designer is too expensive. The following report on some of the designs produced by myself with the assistance of an architect, Mogens Nilsson, and a sculptor, Jens Andreason, is an illustration of the way in which this arrangement has worked out in practice.

Before commencing the design of any article it is necessary for the designer to investigate thoroughly the many industrial and commercial problems involved, and it is not until these demands are satisfied that I normally begin work on the preliminary stages of the design with drawings and a series of patterns made of plasticine. When all the necessary alterations have been made, a number of uniform patterns is cast in gypsum. At this stage the designs are thoroughly discussed by all the departments concerned and a final selection is made. The selected pattern is then carefully measured and the work is carried on at the drawing-board. Finally, an exact wooden pattern is made which forms the basis for the drawings of tools and which is used for the comparison of samples before the tools are made.

Plastics has become a name for a series of materials of quite different qualities and possibilities. But common to most of them is their tendency to reflect light in an unpleasant manner when the material surface is plain. As a result we normally try to avoid the use of completely plain surfaces. These materials are sensitive to subtle modelling, and by making use of this quality it is not necessary to have expensive milled curves to obtain better textures. The bread tray, 6, is an example of one of the first attempts in this line.

The tooth-glass and toothbrush container, 5, were based on research into size and shape. It was found that tooth-glasses are generally thicker than necessary and very often too deep to be cleaned easily with the fingers. For this reason it was decided that the tooth-

2 3

The number of fittings on this coffee pot, redesigned for Dansk Aluminium Industri A/S, has been reduced from 18 to 6.

glass should be smaller than a finger's length, and at the same time the connection between the sides and bottom was curved to avoid the collection of tooth-paste sediment. Both the bread tray and the tooth-glass and container are produced by Dansk Bakelit Industri A/S.

Thorough preliminary work enables the designer to reduce the variety of models on the market by standardisation, thus simplifying production and distribution. Dansk Aluminium Industri A/S entrusted us with the task of redesigning all handles for a number of different saucepans, pots, pans and jugs, 1. Formerly 16 different handles and fittings had been produced by this firm. A rational study of the way in which each handle was used, the distribution of weight in various positions and so on, showed that in certain cases a number of handles could be designed so that they would be interchangeable. Thus the variations might be reduced to six, while, owing to the fact that the thickness of the BAKELITE allowed different riveting techniques, the number of different fittings could be reduced to three.

The shape of the handles is largely a result of the press technique and this has been used to advantage in the final design. The lower side is slightly curved so that it fits comfortably in the palm of the hand. The ordinary cylindrical handles have a tendency to roll in the hand and it is often difficult to feel the

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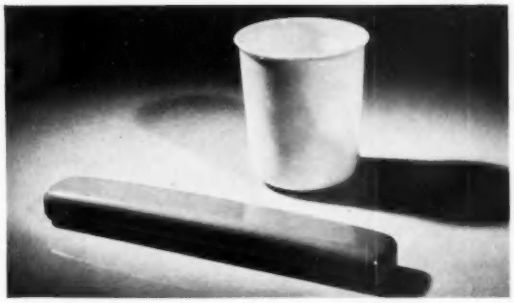
Electrical sockets before and after redesign. Produced by Philips A/S.



5

Toothbrush container and tooth-glass designed for Dansk Bakelit Industri A/S.

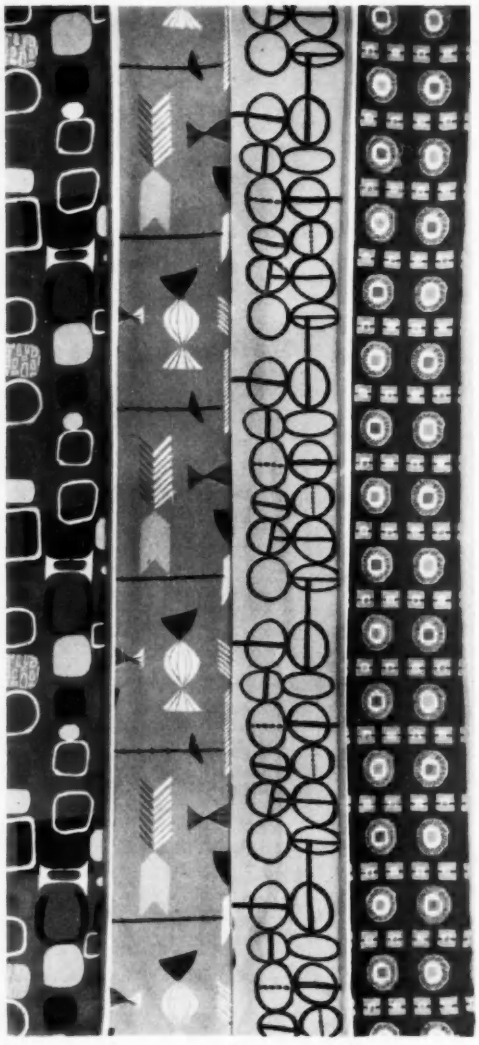
exact angle at which the pan is being held. By using the wedge shape handles this difficulty is removed. The handle also has a low edge against the surface of the pan which warns the finger against direct contact with the hot metal. During the last few years several types of handles have appeared which have grooves for the fingers. This, of course, eliminates the tendency to roll but has the disadvantage of forcing the hand into one particular position. Furthermore, it is impossible to design handles to fit the size and shape of all hands.

The handles for the coffee-pot, 2 and 3, another of our designs for Dansk Aluminium Industri A/S, are produced through simple pressing from underneath. The number of fittings has been considerably reduced and by using a hinge faced with a small projecting BAKELITE moulding it is possible to carry the pot and open the lid with one hand.

Very often the task of the industrial designer is limited to the simplification of existing models. The electrical sockets for fluorescent fittings are shown here, 4, before and after redesign. In this instance, our task was to create a socket which would collect less dust, which would be easier to fit and which would combine these qualities with agreeable appearance, since the socket was to be used in an exposed position. This piece of work was carried through with the co-operation of the lighting department of Philips A/S.

Plastic bread trays produced by Dansk Bakelit Industri A/S.

6



1 2 3 4

Four examples of the new fabric designs in the range of David Whitehead Ltd, and now on the market, are shown on this page. In all but one case they have been designed by well-known artists working on a free-lance basis. These new designs, together with others in the Whitehead range, formed the basis of a recent exhibition held in the soft furnishing department of Browns of Chester. The display was arranged on a wire frame structure and the exhibits were supported by contemporary furniture and light fittings. The frames were designed and constructed by Whitehead's specially for the exhibition.

ABOVE: **1**, *spun rayon fabric with five colour ways designed by Jacqueline Groag.* **2**, *spun rayon fabric with three colour ways designed by Marian Mahler.* **3**, *cotton fabric with five colour ways designed by Terence Conran.* **4**, *long staple spun rayon fabric with five colour ways designed by J. T. Murray. All fabrics* 48 *inches wide.*

LEFT *and* TOP LEFT: *Two views of the exhibition of Whitehead fabrics held in the soft furnishing department of Brown's of Chester. Manufacturers of the furniture and light fittings shown were: Ernest Race Ltd; Hille & Co Ltd; Finmar Ltd; Troughton & Young Ltd; The Merchant Adventurers Ltd.*

FOREIGN chronicle

The second of a new series of features on design opinion abroad compiled by L. P. Schreiber.

The Humanization of Urban Life, *by S. Giedion*

There have been two stages of development in the architecture of the twentieth century. For the first stage, the inspiration came from the revolt against falsification of forms instigated in the late nineteenth century by men like William Morris and H. van de Velde. From there it passed on to architecture at the beginning of this century and reached its climax in California. Later on this same first stage joins social considerations to aesthetic values: from Oud's workers' colony at Rotterdam (1919) to Le Corbusier's famous 'Unite d'habitation' at Marseille (1947–52).

As for the second stage, it can be defined as the tendency to humanise urban life by re-establishing contact between the individual and the community. This tendency, and the need for it, are to be seen everywhere: in the Fourteenth of July celebrations in France, in the huge crowd gathered outside the Rockefeller Center in New York on Victory Day in 1945, and also in the two-day fete which thronged the streets of Zurich in 1951, when the sixth centenary of the entry of the town into the Confederation was celebrated. And surely it is the same need which accounts for the fact that the last CIAM congress, held in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, in July 1951, chose as a topic for discussion: 'The core of the city' meaning 'The heart of the city'. It was not concerned with legislation or formality, but with giving town-dwellers the chance of ceasing to live isolated among a crowd of fellow-citizens and of becoming a community of true human beings. (One may recognise a parallel tendency in contemporary art, and its desire to restore human reality in its nakedness.) To put this idea into concrete terms: the value of St Mark's Square in Venice was continually emphasised at the Congress, from the point of view of what Le Corbusier has called "the royalty of the pedestrian".

WERK, *November* 1952

Machine-woven carpets, *by Britt-Eva Furstenberg*

Some years ago FORM made an appeal for a good everyday carpet which could be mass-produced and have some artistic quality. A glance at the market reveals that the machine-made smooth carpets made of wool mixed up with hair-yarn usually seen today can best be classified as 'the good standard carpet'. Fortunately, the technique of manufacture has restrained the design. These carpets are usually striped – an inspiration from the home-craft carpet-makers. Some of them, however, have an evenly distributed design which expresses particularly well the fundamental purpose of a carpet – namely, an object on which one walks. One type of these carpets is woven in such a manner that the design reappears in different colours on the reverse. A very carefully thought out design is necessary in this case in order not to produce an inside-out effect. But on the whole, the machine-made hair-yarn carpets on the market have a rather uniform appearance.

Good designs are not very prominent among machine-woven pile rugs. The Chenille technique used in making pile rugs provides unlimited possibilities for variety of design and colour, but advantage has seldom been taken of it. A special variation is the half-pile rug, which at its worst looks like a floorcloth with fringes.

FORM, No. 7, 1952

Good Design knows no date

If design could be reduced to its barest elements, it would read like a graph of the temperament, the thinking, and the way of life of the period that produced it. But from one period to the next, the basic outline would be seen to undergo tremendous changes. The point of contact between these unceasing changes is quality. The best design of one period can live side by side with the best of another. This point is made often by AMERICAN HOUSE & GARDEN which has shown how the objects of many periods and places can be freely and successfully combined.

AMERICAN HOUSE & GARDEN, *October* 1952

Jurg Bally's mechanically inclined furniture

In Zurich architectural training implies, among other things, a thorough grasp of furniture construction, which is why none of Jurg Bally's clients considers it unusual that the young Swiss architect should design and manufacture custom-made furniture.

There is, however, an unusual aspect to his work: besides understanding craftsmanship and the integral role of furniture in interiors, Bally has the outlook of an engineer. The mechanical devices involved are neither grandiose nor complicated; only unusual methods of eliminating weight without loss of strength, of demounting, of mobilising and of multiplying the functions of a single piece.

INTERIORS, *September* 1952

New chairs from Denmark

LEFT: *Stacking chair designed by Arné Jacobson and made of laminated beech. The metal legs are finished with a plastic covering and are fitted at the ends with rubber shoes. The legs are attached with metal locks screwed on to plywood blocks which are glued to the undersurface of the seat. The price is approximately £4 10s 9d tax free.* RIGHT: *Chair designed by A. Bender Madsen and E. Larsen. The seat and back are of teak with the legs of turned beech. The price including tax is £17 4s 10d. Both chairs are manufactured by Fritz Hansens Eftfl of Denmark and are distributed in this country by Finmar Ltd.*

NEWS

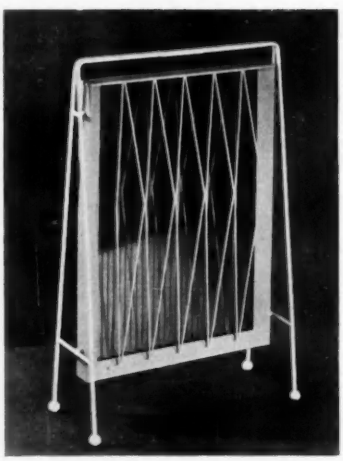
Coronation seats

Many local authorities and other bodies are likely to commemorate the Coronation by providing new outdoor seats for the public. The CoID and the Corporation of Birmingham have therefore arranged a competition for the best outdoor seat design.

The competition is open to manufacturers who are invited to send in prototypes or mock-ups of their new designs by April 30. Seats for any purpose are eligible and competitors may use any materials and any appropriate method of construction. No prizes are offered but diplomas will be given for designs which reach a sufficiently high standard. A public exhibition will be held this spring in which all entries, to be sent in under a pseudonym, will be displayed.

Judges for the competition will be: Herbert J. Manzoni, City Engineer and Surveyor to the City of Birmingham; G. E. E. Ross, General Manager of the Birmingham Parks Committee; A. G. Sheppard, Birmingham City Architect; Brenda Colvin, President of the Institute of Landscape Architects; Gordon Cullen, Assistant Editor, THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW; Gordon Russell, Director, CoID; Mark Hartland Thomas, Chief Industrial Officer, CoID. Further details can be obtained from 'Outdoor Seats Competition', Council of Industrial Design, and manufacturers should write stating their intention to compete before February 14.

Radiant screen heater



The element of this heater consists of a metallic path deposited on the back of an armourplate glass panel. A decorative guard gives protection againts contact with the hot panel which reaches a temperature of about 200°F. To indicate when the heater is switched on, a small red lamp recessed into the bottom of the heater, casts a pool of red light on the floor. The heater is produced by the Hotpoint Electric Appliance Co Ltd and is marketed by Premier Electric Heaters Ltd.

£500 for furniture design

Prizes of £300, £150 and £50 are offered by THE CABINET MAKER in a furniture design competition. The competition, open to designers resident in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, will be for the design of all the pieces of furniture required by married couples whose accommodation for bedroom, lounge and dining room is contained within a floor area not exceeding 750 square feet. The Furniture Makers' Guild has organised the competition and the closing date for the submission of designs will be April 20. The judges will be Edward H. Pinto, Managing Director of Compactom Ltd, Anthony Heal, Chairman of Heal and Son Ltd, Arnold Tozer, Director of Maple and Co Ltd, L. R. Ercolani, Director of Furniture Industries Ltd and Sir Hugh Casson. Full particulars can be obtained from S. D. Plummer, Clerk of the Furniture Makers' Guild, 29 Martin Lane, Cannon Street, London EC4.

The Topham Trophy

Prizes of £300, £100 and £50 with ten honourable mentions of £12 10s each are offered by Messrs Tophams Ltd for the design and execution of the Topham Trophy. The trophy, to commemorate a race of the same name at Aintree, is open to all students and staff of art schools in the British Isles and must illustrate a theme related to horse racing and jumping. Among the judges will be Gordon Russell, Director, CoID and T. H. Scrutton, Director, Walker Art Gallery. Further details can be obtained from Messrs Tophams Ltd, Aintree Race Course, Liverpool.

Design course at Urchfont

'Design and the Retailer', a residential course on design in domestic electrical equipment, will be held for retail buyers and salesmen at Urchfont Manor (the Wiltshire residential college for adult education) on March 9–13. It is being organised by the College in conjunction with the CoID and with assistance from the British Electrical Development Association.

The programme allows plenty of time for informal discussion in groups and the organisers regard this as an important feature of the course. There will be a display of well designed electrical goods and a selection of films will be shown in one session.

Retailers wishing to enrol their staff for the course should write to The Warden, Urchfont Manor, Devizes, Wilts. The fee, inclusive of board and accommodation from Monday evening to Friday morning, is £2 10s for those resident in Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight; and £3 10s for those who live elsewhere.

A show house to attract tenants

The Alkali Division of ICI has sponsored a show house on a council housing estate at Northwich to encourage employees from Liverpool to live near the new factory.

The house, which is typical of others on the estate designed by Bernard Taylor and Associates, has been furnished by the architects for the staff welfare department of ICI. The total sum spent on furniture and fittings was £177 6s. To support the project, a booklet called FURNISHING YOUR HOME has been written by Harry Ward, one of the architects concerned, for ICI. It gives details of furnishings available from local retailers, suggestions on decoration, and the making by hand of some equipment. Full information on the working of the hire-purchase retail system and the exact cost of all necessary items are presented in short, easily understood tables. It can be obtained, price 1s, from Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd, Northwich, Cheshire.

New trade journal

The first issue of SHOP WINDOW, a new magazine appearing bi-monthly, has just been published by the International Wool Secretariat. The object of the journal is to promote the sales of wool merchandise in the face of increasing competition. Among subjects dealt with in the first issue are salesmanship, shop window display and the services of the Trade Press generally. The magazine, which will be circulated by subscription only, costs 2s 6d, and copies can be obtained from The Department of Trade Promotion, International Wool Secretariat, Dorland House, 18–20 Regent Street, London SW1.

Three ideal homes

At the 1953 Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is erecting three houses to be furnished by retailers in co-operation with the CoID. There will be a three-bedroomed house furnished by T. C. Dunning & Son Ltd and designed by Phoebe De Syllas, a two-bedroomed house furnished by Messrs Hunter & Smallpage and designed by Joan Pattrick and a two-bedroomed ground floor flat furnished by E. Mayes & Son Ltd and designed by Lady Margaret Casson. The retailers were chosen by a draw at which representatives of the furnishing trade press were present.

New handwriting society

On November 25, 1952, the Society for Italic Handwriting was inaugurated by the Society of Scribes and Illuminators. It aims to support interest in italic handwriting and to improve standards by the adoption of cursive hands based on Renaissance models. The chairman of the society is Joseph Compton and there are now 130 members. The annual subscription is 10s, and details of membership, which is open to all, can be obtained from Miss Anna Hornby, Iles Green, Far Oakridge, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

'Designers in Britain'

DESIGNERS IN BRITAIN, volume four, edited by Herbert Spencer, will be published early in 1954. The contents will be as before, but with aircraft, cars and fashion added.

New address for THM

THM Partners, specialists in interior design, have moved into new offices at 48 Dover Street, London W1.

BOOKS

The Blacksmith's Craft, *an introduction to smithing for apprentices and craftsmen, Rural Industries Bureau,* 8*s* 6*d*

This book is both admirably produced and clearly written. In fact it covers the elementary aspects of the subject comprehensively enough to justify the sort of claim advertisements make in popular magazines. "Be your own blacksmith", "When I first picked up a hammer I couldn't hit a nail", "At first all my friends laughed but now I make all my own gate hooks".

But seriously, is it really an intelligent response to contemporary needs? Who, for instance, is likely to set up as a village smith with a text-book in one hand, and the recommended hammer in the other?

Today, hand-forging is but one facet of general workshop practice, country no less than town. True, it is an important ancilliary to other metal-working techniques such as oxy-acetylene cutting and welding, electric arc welding, power grinding and so forth, but most text books on engineering workshop practice devote an entirely adequate section to the subject, and this is surely all that is wanted, for after all, the essential requirements for good smithing have always been a good eye and an intelligent instructor. A stiff covered handbook selling at 8*s* is hardly a throw-away pamphlet.

Surely the sponsors cannot really believe that the best way to learn blacksmithing is self-teaching through a copiously illustrated and, at the elementary level, extremely detailed text-book? If this isn't their intention then its *raison d'être* escapes me.

It is perhaps unromantic to admit that the *village blacksmith* as such is an anachronism replaced by the *agricultural engineer*, who may or may not shoe horses, but who in any case could not afford to do a job the long way round. He works after all to earn his living, not to lend glamour to an already largely mechanised countryside.

COTTERELL BUTLER

Form, *edited by Max Bill, English version by P. Morton Shand, Carl Werner AG, Basle,* 60*s*

This is an important book. It is of great interest in that the author's survey shows the wide sweep of his mind – a width which it is most refreshing to meet today when specialisation in its myriad forms tends to restrict our interests more and more.

He rightly stresses the dangers of a half-baked approach to design, for instance, by popularising streamlining by aggressive advertising. He emphasises the necessity for considering the convenience of the user, which is sometimes overlooked in convenience of manufacture. And he points out the folly of an iron curtain between hand and machine. He shows us one of the admirable Swiss concrete bridges which seem perfectly contrived for their setting of natural grandeur, and also an interior of a Swiss restaurant car, which might usefully be compared with our fantastic 'tavern cars'. The furnishings of the home seem to me to fall behind the equipment for drawing office, office, transport, or factory. G.R.

Two exhibitions for Coronation souvenirs

The photograph shows some of the souvenirs in pottery, glass, pewter and plastic that will be on show in a trade exhibition, the Fancy Goods Fair at Harrogate, from February 2–6. These and additional designs will later be shown in a public exhibition at the Tea Centre, London, from February 24–March 14. All the designs shown will be among those approved by the CoID Coronation Souvenirs Committee. So far out of 1,857 submitted by manufacturers, 771 have been approved by the Committee and 110 others have been given provisional approval. To secure a place in the public exhibition, manufacturers should send in their designs before February 14.

Royal Doulton Potteries, *by Desmond Eyles. Designed and produced by D. J. Keymer & Co Ltd,* 5*s*

The most recent addition to a series of monographs, published by Doulton & Co Ltd, entitled 'Ceramics in Art and Industry'.

Designers in this issue

Art Editor: Peter Hatch, MSIA.

Cover: F. H. K. Henrion, FSIA; Page 8: R. E. Bishop, CBE, FRES; Page 9: Drawings by Brian Aldridge, ARCA (also pages 10, 11 and 13); Page 13: Kenneth Holmes, OBE, ARCA, MSIA; N. R. G. Poynton, MSIA; Page 20: Paul Boissevain, DIPARCH, MSIA; R. C. Hiscock; Philip Pound; T. Bradley, MSIA; Walter Lines; A. J. Milne, MSIA; Howard B. Keith, MSIA; Page 21: A. F. Oatley; G. A. Oatley; S. H. Smith; Roger Peach, FSIA; Leslie Martin, MA, PHD, FRIBA; Page 29: Erik Herløw; Mogens Milsson; Jens Andreason; Page 32: Jacqueline Groag, FSIA; Marian Mahler, MSIA; Terence Conran; J. T. Murray, ARIBA; Ernest Race, FSIA; Page 33: A. Bender Madsen; E. Larsen; Arne Jacobson; Page 34: Lady Margaret Casson, ARIBA; Phoebe de Syllas; Herbert Spencer, MSIA; Joan Pattrick; Gordon Cullen, FSIA; Sir Hugh Casson, RDI, FRIBA, FSIA

Acknowledgments

Pages 23, 24 and 25: Photographs by courtesy of British Railways.

Correction

The name of Mr Robert Cantor, who has opened a design service at The Cottage, Over Whitacre, near Coleshill, Warwickshire, was inadvertently given as Robert Canton in our last issue.

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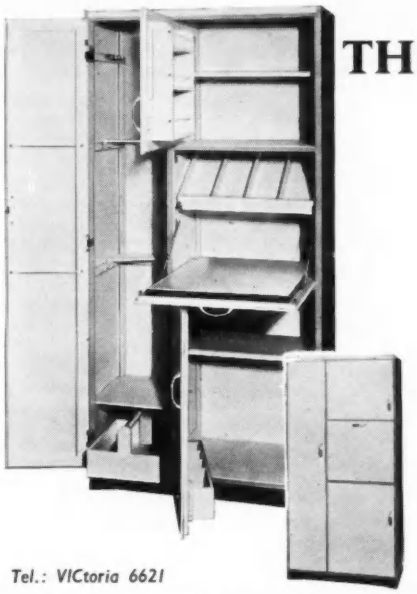

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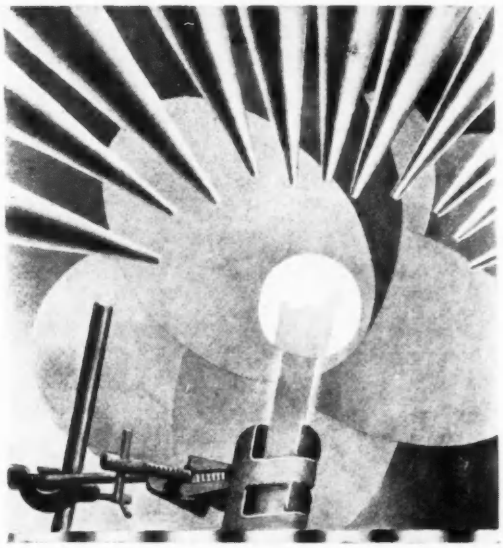

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ICI

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